Ross Dowson archives – correspondence – Year 1988

01_03	Letter to Gus V.H., Burlington, re: advice for a paper on Trotsky and an invitation to visit his library
01_13	Letter to Anne & Geof (Jeff), Ottawa: of books, artists and journals
02-03	Articles in *Left Caucus Newsletter,* ‘’Victory for women’s rights to choose movement;’’ re: Supreme Court decision removes abortion from the Criminal Code Also, ``Clear names of victims of Stalinism;’’ Canadian supporters of an appeal to the Soviet government listed
03_01	***Document: ‘’Statement on the campaign to clear the names of the accused in the Moscow Trials;’’*** announcing the rehabilitation of Nikholai Bukharin and others in the third trial of 1938, including some co-thinkers of Trotsky but not Trotsky himself; text of the appeal, list of Canadian and international supporters
03_01B	Letter to Dick (F.), Hull, QC, re: borrowed Meech Lake material and news of the Moscow Trials appeal
03_23	Resolution to the ONDP-LC (Left Caucus) re: Kopyto; urging the Law Society of Ontario to end its harassment of Kopyto and Codina
05_00	Undated letter (found in May) to Anton Kuerti, re: his defeat in a bid to become the NDP candidate in RD’s riding
06_13	Letter to *Bulletin IDOM* (USA), re: Kuerti`s anti-war campaign to represent RD`s NDP riding defeated, as was Kopyto`s earlier civil rights bid by the gay community
07_09	+Report on Camp Poundmaker: May 24 Weekend, maintenance plans, RD’s and Lois’s health problems; June 5 meeting discussed selling the Camp; June 10 real estate broker visits Camp, June 11: agent suggests sale price; map sketch of property
07_11	Letter to the Editor of the (Toronto) *Globe & Mail*, re: apprising him of the fact that Trotsky had also written a biography of Stalin (which he was finishing writing when his assassin struck him down)
10_00	Notes by RD re: the NDP federal council meeting; how the leadership succeeded in tying the party to national ‘’security;’’ how the Left Caucus has prevented the NDP abandoning an anti-NATO stance in the past; the LC petition in response to this right drift

10_ 12 ***Booklet by Arnie Mintz: ‘’A sketch of Ross Dowson: 1) High School,”*** (radicalization and joining the Workers Party, expelled from the CCYM (CCF youth); ***‘’2) Work,”*** (brief work interrupted by WW2, clandestine SWL work and a tour across Canada); ``***3) War, 4) Army;”*** incl. photos: Spartacus (Youth) Corn Roast, Toronto 1935; Maurice Spector, two of Ross as teen and youth (undated); Paddy Stanton, boxing trainer; Ross in the Forces, 1942 & 1944, Ross in his 40s; maps, *The Vanguard* 1934; articles and posters; 1944 SWL May Day Manifesto

10_27 ***Document: Additions and deletions by R.D. to the booklet ‘’A sketch of Ross Dowson, by Arnie Mintz;***`` a text file of the booklet with additions and deletions by Ross and A. Mintz

11_18 Letter to Doctor Tator, Toronto Western (Hospital), re: RD experiencing severe symptoms both physical and mental

11_99 Article in *Left Caucus Newsletter*, ‘’Left Caucus challenge to NDP fed. council;’’ citing NDP policy since 1969 opposing NATO/NORAD and violation of party democracy in adopting a position ‘’Canada`s stake in common security’’ during an election campaign

12_15 Notes by RD: ‘,Report on discussion with Dr. Tator; lack of any serious diagnosis and confusion

January 3, 1988
40 Homewood Ave., Apt 1809
Toronto, Ont., M4Y 2K2

Gus Van Harten
492 Deerhurst Drive
Burlington, Ont., L7L 5T2

Dear Gus:

&

Via Vic, Lois I have heard of the presertation you made on Leon Trotsky. Without yet hearing your viewa on his life and work a and without knowing the materials that you had to prepare yourself I am taking the liberty of sneding you a couple of relevant items that I think will be of interest to you

After years of arguement with my brother Murray, who being my two years old r brother I cou d not concedeknew more thar I ,he gave a copy of Trotsky's autobdiography . After I read that and a few more book s my mindx was made up.I became an active socialist of Trotsky's persuasion

I am enclosing copies of a couple of other items that I think you will find of iterest . Which of Trotsky's writings did you come across? As you have possibly surmised I have copies of his major writings that have been translated into English. I would be pleased to loan you any of them. Drop me a line--but better still drop in on me. I have a fine library covering a wide area of knowledge from which I would be pleased to loan you anything-at yakyak no charge. The E. Germain article may be a little tough first run through but he is the most able exponent of Trotsky's views t oday

Pass on my regards to the family--seasons greetings

Ross Dowson

Ross Dowson, #1809
40 Homewood Ave
Toronto M4Y 2K2
Jan 13,1988

152 Concord Street South
Ottawa, Ont. K1S 0Z4

Dear Anne and Geof(Jeff)

I have just managed to take a bite of that excellent book that you gave meaxmas a Christmas gift.----- on Rakovsky. I hope you wont mind but I clipped the photo of Trotsky standing beside Rakovsky and pasted it inside of the frontispage. I had never seen it before-A quite different picture of Trosky, deferring to Rakovsky. I hope that you are keeping in mind my request for a catalogue of Allison & Busby titles.

And what about Lois'cottage. Did she manage to coverup the breakin satisfactorily? You know she and Joyce had the most rudimentary tools with them.

I read somewhere recently that there is a major showing of the works of Paul-Emile Borduas being staged shorlty in Montreal I think. Probably worth going to see. If you go buy at my expense a copy of the catalogue - I would think that there would be color plates. Some of his best stuff remindes me of the French painter Soulages who I came across accidently. The only abstract painting I cared for.

So did you think to pick up a sub to International Viewpoint? I am wondering if it would not be more useful to subscribe to Bulletin in Defence of Marxism published in the States. It tends to carry the key line articles from IV and gives much more weight to important and closer American material.

comradely

Ross D

Victory for women's right to choose movement

By Ross Dowson
St. George-St. David

When the judges of the Supreme Court of Canada upheld by a decisive majority all the basic arguments of the Right to Choose movement in its 20-years struggle to remove abortion from the Criminal Code in the Morgentaler case, ruling that the legislation threatened the health of women by causing arbitrary delays and unfair disparities in access to abortion across the country, there was widespread jubiliation. But there was no joy in the ranks of the federal government. Over the past year, they have been pillars of law and order in using their authority to implement laws under threat of harsh penalties for noncompliance, to drive striking postal workers back on the job, and violate the basic democratic right of the railway workers to strike.

But not when it came to dealing with the BC premier's defiance of the Supreme Court . By their silence in the face of BC Premier Vander Zalm's arrogant challenge that his government will no longer fund abortion unless a woman's life was at peril, the federal govenment has emboldened other provincial governments to violate the court's ruling. Only Ontario and Manitoba have agreed to finance all aboritons in their jurisdictions whether in hospitals, clinics or doctors' offices.

The NDP through MP and former party president Marion Dewar has urged the government to immediately stop all federal funds going to provinces that refuse to follow the Supreme Court judgment and thereby violate the principle of universality in the Health Act.

On Feb. 9, Justice Minister Hnatyshyn broke his silence to announce that he will be introducing another, a new abortion law -- ominous news indeed in the light of comments from prominent Tory sources about the rights not of the woman who bears it , but of the foetus which, if carried through to term becomes a child and the responsibility of the mother to raise and care for regardless of her circumstances. CARAL one of the key forces in the struggle against the old law has declared that it will fight all laws dealing with abortion through the courts and in popular demonstrations.

Clear names of victims of Stalinism

As a supplement to our June 1987 Left Caucus *Newsletter* we published an appeal that had been issued in England by the Moscow Trials Campaign. It was addressed to the Soviet government asking it to re-examine the cases of the victims of the infamous Moscow Show Trials of 1936-38, expressing confidence that the accused will be shown to have been innocent, and urging they immediately be rehabilitated, their honor restored, their families compensated and their graves marked.

One of our supporters, Ross Dowson, circulated copies of the appeal among prominent activists on the Canadian Left, asking them to signify their support by sending their signatures to his address at 1809-40 Homewood Ave., Toronto M4Y 2K2. To date, some 43 well-known Canadians, listed below, have endorsed the appeal:

Bruce Allen, Andre Bekerman, Walter Belyea, Domenico Binetti, Carl Birchard, Hans Blumenfeld, John Boyd, Ruth Bullock, Varda Burstyn, Michael Cassidy MP, Sheila Delany, Gord Doctorow, Ross Dowson, Marv Gandall, Cy Gonick, Gerry Hunius, David Joffe, G.S. Kealey, Harry Kopyto, George Martell, David McNally, Joe Meslin, Francois Moreau, Vernel Olson, Leo Panitch, Norman Penner, Jim Pringle, Rilt Prinsep, Judy Rebick, Satu Repo, Wayne Roberts, Lukin Robinson, Dimitri Roussopoulos, Clayton Ruby, Stuart Russell, Rick Salutin, Chris Schenk, William Spira, Donald Swartz, Jerry Szach, Jesse Vorst, Barry Weisleder, Reg Whitaker.

Supporters elsewhere across the globe have transformed this campaign into an international one of remarkable significance. For an expanded list, see *International Viewpoint* Nov. 9, 1987. The list of supporters in the United States is only now expanding and already includes such notables as Norman Mailer, Bertell Ollman, Annette Rubinstein, Paul Sweezy, Pete Seeger, Howard Zinn and others. See *International Viewpoint* Feb. 8, 1988.

Copies of *International Viewpoint* can be purchased in Toronto: Lichtman's Newsstands, SCM Books, DEC Books, and Book City locations; in Ottawa: Globe Magazines, Mags and Fags.

STATEMENT ON THE CAMPAIGN TO CLEAR THE NAMES OF THE ACCUSED IN THE MOSCOW TRIALS

On February 4, the Soviet Supreme Court formally rehabilitated Nikholai Bukharin and all but one of the defendants in the third Moscow Trial of 1938. The lone exception was Genrikh Yagoda, the former head of Stalin's secret police.

In announcing their verdict, the Soviet court declared that all the accusations of "spying", "terrorism", "assassination" and "conspiracy" against the Soviet state and party leadership which were levelled against the defendants were false.

The rehabilitation is a vindication of the efforts of all those who for years and decades now have sought to expose the injustice of the Trials, to reveal the truth behind the Stalinist terror and purges, and to restore the real record to this terrible period of Soviet history.

The February 4 verdict, however, must be seen as only the beginning of success. The Soviet court only rehabilitated the victims of the third Moscow Trial; those of the first and second trials still await justice.

This is not accidental. As a number of observers have pointed out, the ideological affinity of Gorbachev's supporters with Bukharin makes the rehabilitation of the third trial's defendants less problematic. The identity and the views of those of the first and second trials, which numbered most of the leaders of the Communist Left Opposition and United Opposition, is a much bigger problem.

It should be noted, however, that those already rehabilitated include Nikolai Krestinsky, a close friend and co-thinker of the chief accused, Leon Trotsky, though he was never a member of the Opposition, and also Christian Rakovsky, who was the top leader of the Opposition next to Trotsky. Furthermore, the trumped-up charges and the methods of torture and forced confessions were the very same used in all the trials.

It is therefore essential that continued pressure be brought to bear on the Gorbachev leadership from among the international labour, socialist and human rights movements to rehabilitate all victims of all the Moscow Trials. Not until the entire record is exposed to the full light of "glasnost" can we rest content.

To this end, we are pressing on here in Canada with the Campaign to Clear the Names of the Accused in the Moscow Trials which began last September and which has gained significant support. The following is a list of those who have so far added their names to the appeal. In addition, the campaign has broadened considerably on the international scale, most importantly within the United States.

Bruce Allen, Andre Bekerman, Walter Belyea, Domenico Binetti, Carl Birchard, Hans Blumenfeld, John Boyd, Ruth Bullock, Varda Burstyn, Michael Cassidy MP, Sheila Delany, Gord Doctorow, Ross Dowson, Marv Gandall, Cy Gonick, Gerry Hunnius, David Joffe, G.S. Kealey, Harry Kopyto, George Martell, David McNally, Joe Meslin, Francois Moreau, Vernel Olson, Leo Panitch, Norman Penner, Jim Pringle, Rilt Prinsep, Judy Rebick, Satu Repo, Wayne Roberts, Lukin Robinson, Dimitri Roussopoulos, Clayton Ruby, Stuart Russell, Rick Salutin, Chris Schenk, William Spira, Donald Swartz, Jerry Szach, Jesse Vorst, Barry Weisleder, Reg Whitaker

In the United States: Norman Mailer, Bertell Ollman, Annette Rubinstein, Paul Sweezy, Pete Seeger, Howard Zinn, and others

For further information, contact Ross Dowson, 40 Homewood Avenue, #1809, Toronto M4Y 2K2
(416) 961-4554

please copy

It is now over fifty years since the infamous Moscow Show Trials. It is astounding that at a time when the Soviet government is at pains to emphasize its concern with 'human rights' and proclaims the need for 'glasnost' - 'openness' - the accused in these trials, with a few exceptions, are still considered guilty of being paid agents of Nazism, and other crimes.

Among these men were numbered several [illegible] who played outstanding roles in the Russian Revolution of 1917. The reputations of founders of the Soviet state like Zinoviev, Radek, Trotsky and Bukharin were besmirched or expunged from the history books. To-day, no-one doubts that the 'confessions' at the trials - the sole basis for the prosecution - were utterly false. Seven defendants in the third trial, Krestinsky and others, have been both judicially rehabilitated and politically exonerated. So have the military leaders, Tukhachevsky and others, whose military trial in 1937 was held in secret. But the admittedly false evidence against these men was inseparable from the charges against all the other accused.

None of the accused, of course, is alive today. Many were executed immediately after their trials. Others died in prison or camps. Leon Trotsky, the chief accused in all three of the trials, was murdered in exile in 1940. However, families of some of the defendants are still living in the Soviet Union. Some has also suffered imprisonment and exile. It is worth recalling that a review of all these cases was promised by Khrushchev, but this promise was broken.

We the undersigned therefore call on the Soviet government to re-examine the cases against all these victims of the perversion of Soviet justice, as took place with Krestinsky. We are confident that all those accused in the Trials of 1936-1938 will be shown to have been innocent. They should immediately be rehabilitated, their honour restored, their families compensated and their graves marked.

Tariq Ali, Pakistan/Britain
Chr. Anastasiadis/Greece
Ria Beckers, MP/Holland
Sidney Bidwell, MP/Britain
Hugo Blanco/Peru
Efraim Calvo, MP/Mexico
Vlady Chbalchich, USSR/Mexico
Noam Chomsky, USA
Jeremy Corby, MP/Britain
Kamil Dagher/Lebanon
Meghnad Desai, India/Britain
Tamara Deutscher
Jose-Luis Diaz-Moll, MP/Mexico
Mildred Gordon, MP/Britain
Virgiliao Guimaraes, MP/Brasil
Eric Heffer, MP/Britain
Rosario Ibarra, MP/Mexico
Tom Kemp/Britain
Göte Kilden, Sweden
Alain Krivine/France
Joanne Landy, USA
Pierre Legrève/Belgium

Peter Lonkhorst, MP/Holland
Eddy Loyden, MP/Britain
Livio Maitan/Italy
Ernest Mandel, Belgium
Marguerito montes, mexico.
Ian Mikardo, MP/ Britain
Jakob Moneta/Germany
Stan newens, MP/Britain
Ricardo Pascoe, MP/Mexico
Pedro Penalosa, MP/Mexico
Rosalia Peredo, MP/Mexico
Raul Pont, MP/Brasil
Krijna Raj, India.
Michel Raptis/Greece.
Cyril Smith/Britain
Bala Tampoe, Sri Lanka
J. Ulburghs, MP (MEP)/Belgium
Frank Vandenbroecke, MP/Belgium
Andrée Van Es, MP/Holland
Marijke Van Hemeldonck, MP (MEP)/Belgium
François Vercammen/Belgium
David Winnick, MP/Britain.

Dick F
2203 - 11o, chemin du Cahateau ,
Hull, Quebec, J9A 1T4

Ross Dowson, #1809
40 Homewood Ave.,
Toronto, M4Y2K2
March 1, 1968

Dear Dick

Thanks very much for sending me the material on Meech Lake . I passed it along to Lois Bedard who had already written an item for the Left Caucus Newsletter. I am enclosing a copy for your information. I did not take up your criticis of Dimension as I have a bigger one going with them ....on the Moscow Trials appeal. Although I made a special request that they publish the modest Canadian list, and the list contains a considerable number of their contributors, they never even so much as answered my letter However on Fet 4 the USSR Supreme Court cleared all the names of the accused of the Third Moscow Trials and thereby condemned all those who apolgized and served as accomplices of hundreds of thousands of communists

I hope all goes well with you

fraternally

Ross Dowson

Kopyto

Whereas Toronto human rights lawyer Harry Kopyto was cleared by the Supreme Court of Ontario of the archaic and rarely enforced charge of contempt of court for uttering the words that "the courts and the RCMP are sticking so close together you'd think they were put together with crazy glue"

and whereas the Law Society of Ontario has now launched a prosecution of Kopyto along with his lawyer Angelo Codina with the obvious aim of driving him out of the profession

therefore be it resolved that we protest this years long process as constituting unconscionable harassment and that we demand that it cease forthwith.

"Passed St George St Davids Mark 23/88"

"passed St. George-St. Davids Mard 23/88"

(handwritten document)

Ross Dowson #1809 *(found in May 1988)*
Toronto

Dear Anton Kuerti:

191 votes was very good indeed
You made the best speech in my opinion

But *(illegible)*

I am sure the Glenn Wheeler article in NOW had considerable impact. A crude slander job but heard the line from many others. In the provincial campaign Campey had the same forces to defeat my nominee Kopyto.

-- A token contribution towards your expenses

With socialist greetings

Ross Dowson

Layton withdrew his endorsement

	(1)	(2)
Jones	84	
Kuerti	180	191
Wilson	207	237

Ross Dowson, # 1809
40 Homewood Ave.,
Toronto 4Y 2k2
June 13, 1988

Anton Kuerti, intnl-known pianist

Bulletin IDOM

Dear comrades;

Enclosed please find a postal money oder in your favor for one hundred dollars Canadian. Would you bring the subs going to myself and Arthur Gray in 40 homewood up into line--the rest going as a donation.

And would you pass along these words to Jean Tussey

Her friend Anton Kuerkiti while doing very well in seeking the NDP nomination for the electoral riding in which I reside failed to win the necessary majority. UnfortunatelyI did not know he was seeking the nomination or for that matter was even associated with this riding which I have been an active member of for over ten years now. As soon as I became acquainted with the fact I sent along my endorsement which he noted in his second appeal. He had a wide range of supporters including top leaders of the party, particularly persons much respected in cultrual circles as it was apparent that as an anti-war activist he had a good possiblity of winning. This became all the mose an attractive possibility as the parliamentary leadership of the past four or five years has been trying to rid itself of the longstanding anti-NATO-amti-NORAD positionens of the party

Anton was done in by a vicious slanderous underground campaign by gays who have long been an important force in this riding knowj as the "Gay Ghettow" Only months ago they sueceeded in defeating Harry Kopyto the lawyer in my suit against the RCMP. who I nominated against the provincial attorney geseralwho initiarted on behlaf of the forece of law and order a charge of contempt of court against Kopyto for his atatement that "Mr Dowson and I have lost our faith in the justice system. We are wondering what is the point of appealing and continuing this charade of the courts in this country which are warped in favor of protecting thepolice. The courts and the RCMP are sticking so close together you'd think they were put fogether with Krazy Glue." A campaign behind Kopyto was also a possible win for the NDP even th ough my suit against the RCMP would have figured lage in it. Incidently Kopyto's appeal to a higher court has in effect succeeded in removing this archaic contempt of court charge from further use by the bourgeoisie. So the Kuerti defeat is the second defeat for the left by the gays. Too bad that the Dowson-Kopyto campaign against the RCMP has been blacked out of the press of the Fourth International. Incidentally Vern Olson who joined the cabal denouncing me as a sell-out to Canadian bourgeois nationalism told me that I had been correct all along. He has possibly been influenced by the fact that his sister in London once a secretary of Gerry Healy now tells me that she considers Scots nationalism to be a key component of the Scots radicalizatic there - and of course now that they entire Canadian left is opposing Canada-US integrati through the so-called free trade pactthrough which the lories will win the coming federa election.against the NDP. Incidently the English ZED Press has released a new study (Marxist) trying to come to grips with this new nationalism

in solidarity

Ross Dowson

REPORT OF OF THE COMMITTEE ON CAMP POUNDMAKER

SATURDAY, JULY 9, 1988 - TORONTO

MAY 24 WEEKEND

The weekend was advertised as a work weekend and Camp opening, in the Minutes of the last Annual Meeting of Camp Poundmaker

In attendance at the work weekend were: Vic and Marie, Sandy, Peter, Gus, Michael Lindsay, Ron, Liz and children - Ross and Lois (3 shareholders)

The work done that weekend was:
a) install the new pump
b) repair and replace the chimney pot
c) repair and restore the lodge outhouse

Vic and Marie, Ross and Lois discussed the status of the Camp as a viable corporation. Each of us noted our inability to continue working on even the minimum maintenance and the new path each of our lives was taking. Lois' responsibility to Ruth preventing her full use of her cabin. Ross' ongoing instability in sitting, walking and working due to his spinal ankylosing spondolsis, Vic and Marie's new agenda due to Marie's retirement and their immediate plans to travel.

Each of us agreed to invite the absent shareholders to a meeting on Sunday, June 5th at Lois' home to discuss the possible sale of Camp Poundmaker.

Ross spoke by phone to Anne and at that time she reported personal agreement with the idea of investigating the selling of the property en bloc.

JUNE 5 MEETING

The shareholders were notified of the meeting held at 1320 Islington Ave. In attendance were: Anne, Jeannette, Eleanore, Vic, Marie, Ross and Lois. We discussed the possibility of selling Camp Poundmaker and struck off a committee of Vic, Ross and Lois to check out a competent real estate company, the sale, and value of Camp Poundmaker. This committee was to report to the shareholders at the meeting of shareholders called for the July weekend at the Camp.

JUNE 10

Liz Hugh arranged on the committee's behalf, a meeting on the property with Earl McCutcheon of McCuthcheon Real Estate Ltd., Napanee. Lois, Vic and Ross showed him the buildings, fence lines and the property's features. He arranged a meeting with the committee in his office on June 11 to discuss prices and sales potential.

JUNE 11

After discussion with Mr. McCutcheon, he said that he would be pleased to try to sell the property, advertising it for $100,000. for the lot and all the buildings and appliances. He suggested that you might have to accept an offer of $85,000. We asked him to prepare a written note to that effect so that we could present it to our shareholders. He said it would be ready to be picked up at his Napanee office on June 30.

Following the June 5 meeting and the discussion with McCutcheon on the 11th and some informal exchanges of opinion between Vic Hugh, Ross, Lois and Anne - Anne informed us that she had been rethinking the discussions of May 24 and would now like to postpone the decision to sell the Camp en bloc through McCutcheon, slated for the July 1st weekend so she would have time to further probe other possibilities. It was agreed to delay proceeding with a sale until a further meeting of the shareholders slated for Saturday, July 9 - 1:30 pm at Lois' to arrive at a satisfactory decision.

JUNE 30

Ross and Lois picked up the written opinion of Earl McCutcheon.

.../2

June 30 - cont'd.

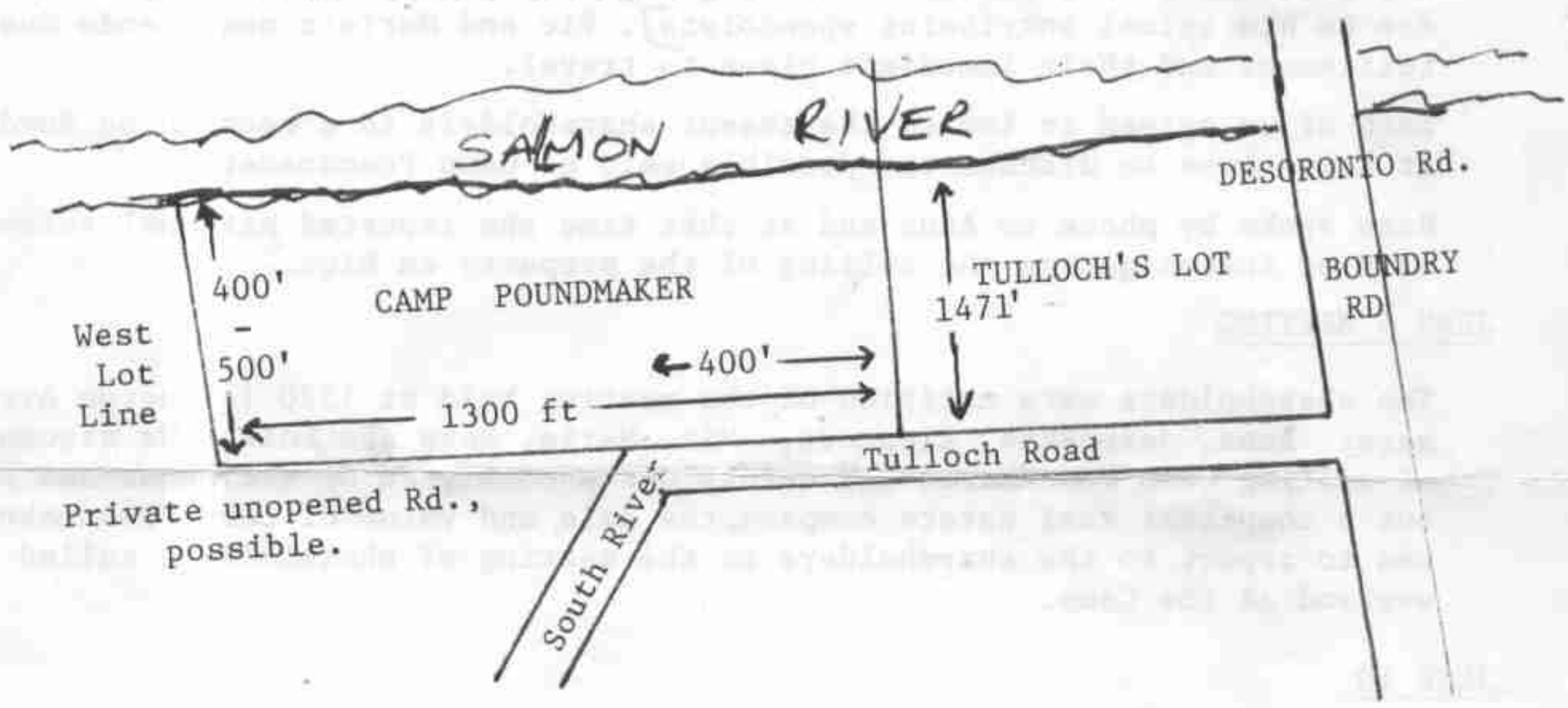
Ross and Lois met with the Township of Tyandanaga Town Clerk, Carman Milligan, at the Township Offices.

We examined the map 27 drawn up on Concession IV showing our lot on the South River Road near Kingsford as drawn up by the Tax Assessors Department. (Our property - Tax Roll 25 138 01

On that map he estimates that we have a 1,330 ft. frontage but that only 400 ft. is on the County maintained road.

He said that the County of Hastings Land Division Committee requires a miminum lot size of one acre with 150 ft. frontage on a County maintained road - we have over 300 ft. of frontage.

He gave us the Application for Consent and said that the Committee meets monthly. He gave us the address that one sends the Application to (along with a cheque for $150. for each severance requested). He said that you had to include a sketch of the proposal as shown in the Consent Application Guide.



If you are granted consent to sever, then you have to have the severed portion surveyed before you get a deed to the parcel.

This Report is submitted by the committee members: Vic Hugh

Ross Dowson

Lois Bedard

top page

Lois Annes prop — sell to pres who wants on

100000

99

100000
-99950

Poundmakers not of

group of the existing debt

Tuesday Sept 11/88

Ross Dowson,#1809
40 Homewood Ave.,
Toronto, M4Y 2K2
961-4554-July 11 1988

Editor of the Globe and Mail
444 Front Street
Toronto

In a recent issue(June 30 1988) you carried an Associated Press dispatch from Moscow reporting that a Dmitri Volkogonov has announced the completion of the "first comprehensive Soviet biography of Stalin." Apparently this two volume biography of Stalin titled Triumph and Tragedy is scheduled to appear next year.

However the renowned Leon Trotsky, though deprived of his citizenship and exiled by Stalin, but a Russian nonetheless, wrote a biography of Stalin which aside from its merit as a work of history has an interesting history of its own.

Trotsky was struck down by a Stalinist assassin who has penetrated his Mexison Cityhhoahehdld under the guise of seeking approval of an article that he had written. According to an editor's note Trotsky has set himself a deadline of the end of August 1940 to deliver the final draft of his book on Stalin and was going over the manuscript on August 20 when the assassin drove a pick-axe into his brain.

Regardless of the circumstances surrounding its creation this is no incidental contribution by the man George Bernard Shaw once called the "prince of pamphleteers." Of the finished book of over 500 pages, 12 chapters, two supplements and an appendix Trotsky had written and polished the first seven chapters and the appendix. Some of the manuscript of the unpolished portion was was in Trotsky's study at the time of the murderous attack and in the ensuing struggle was not only splattered with blood but utterley destroyed. Part of the posthumous manuscript had been made up of notes tentatively grouped by the author, some of it filed under 81 subheadings in more than twice that many folders. It was out of this material that that chapters from 8 to 12 inclusive and two supplements were edited.

Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York and London, inserted a note to the effect that while the whole book was ready to be released at the time of Pearl Harbor (Dec.7, 1941) " its appearance was then postponed by the publisher until after the end of the war." in 1945. Stalin, no longer an ally of Hitler but now of Churchill and Roosevelt was undergoing an incarnation as a benign old man, 'Uncle Joe', soon to by replaced with the head of the 'evil empire! Two of the big contradictions of Gobbachev's Glasnost are the failure to publish Khruschov's 20th Congress exposure of Stalin and the failure to rehabilitate Trotsky. But these too, will come to pass.

sincerely

Ross Dowson

HB
CM-Charles Burt
no thanks

a sketch of

ROSS DOWSON

1. High School
2. Work
3. War
4. Army

Introduction

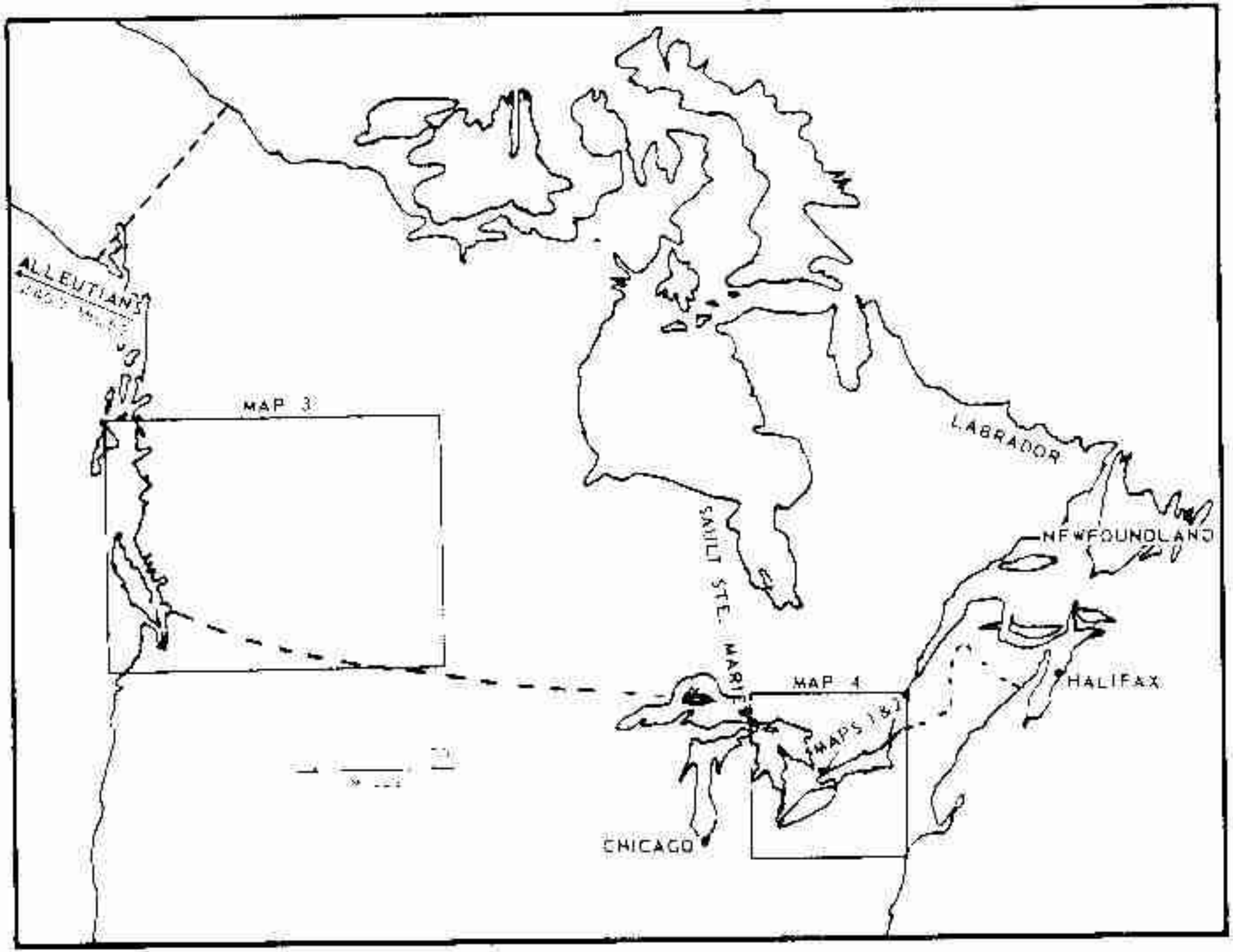
Many have met Ross. This is because he is always available. This book is about his youth. As best as possible this book tries to capture Ross's thinking at the time before and during WWlI.

Ross was consulted in producing this small book. It can be appreciated that memory of events fifty years ago is often only general or changed by time. Events that seem important at the time diminish later. Events not prominent at the time become significant. So chance is involved. Sometimes recollections may be mixed with similar incidents years later. Available archive material has also been used.

This book will shed light on the dictatorship of the proletariat -- the workers tell the truth, the bosses lie -- always. To exploit human beings for capitalist profit, that is the definition of dishonesty.

Ross became a communist at an early age. All too often the revolutionary content of events is buried under a mountain of bourgeois filth. Here is an attempt to unearth it. Too much has remained buried. Still the reader will agree that Ross's memories are rich and vivid.

In Print October 12th, 1988


ALEUTIANS
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NEWFOUNDLAND
SAULT STE. MARIE
MAP 4
MAPS 1&2
HALIFAX
CHICAGO

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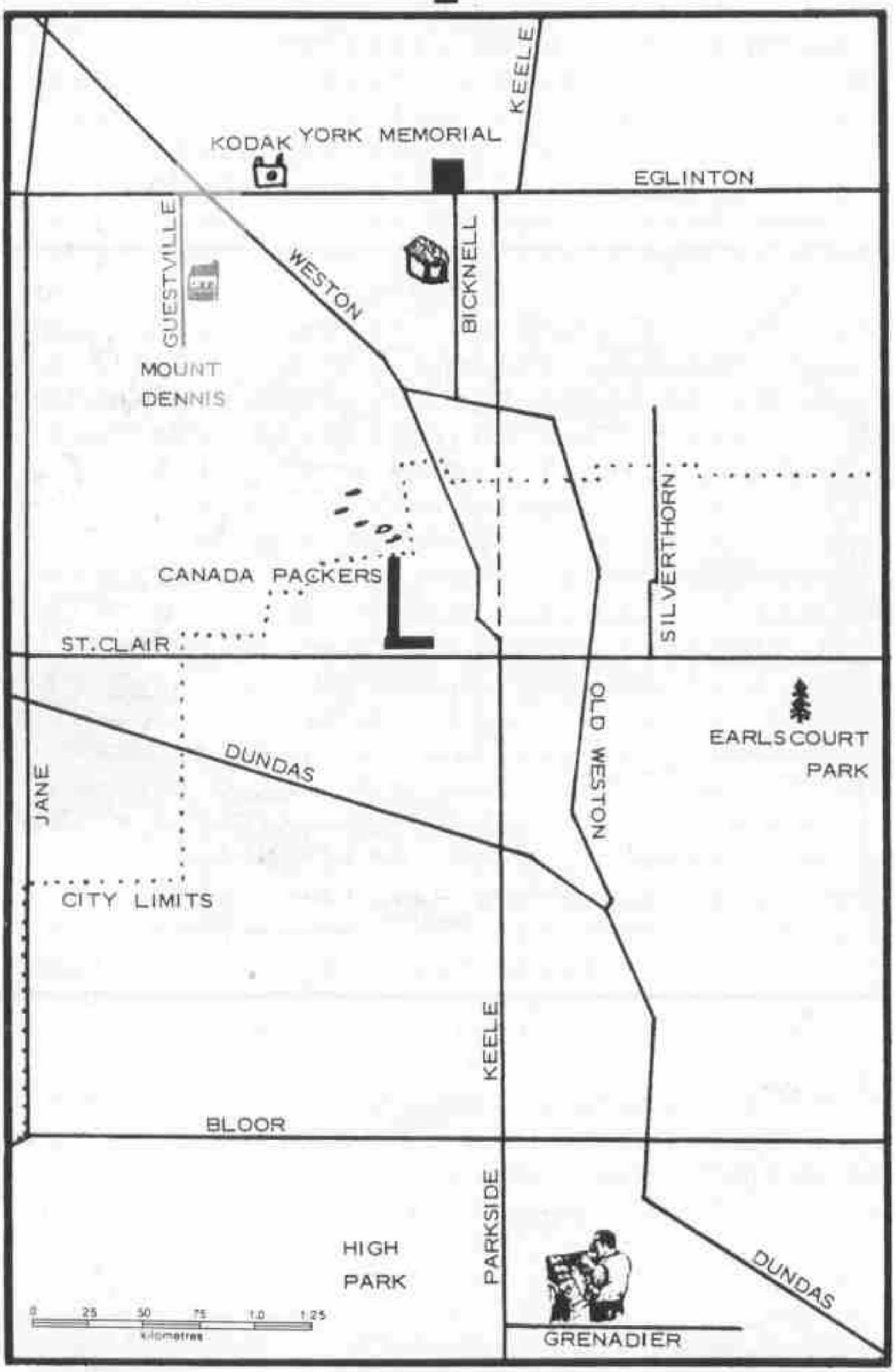
KEELE
KODAK
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EGLINTON
GUESTVILLE
WESTON
BICKNELL
MOUNT
DENNIS
SILVERTHORN
CANADA PACKERS
ST. CLAIR
OLD WESTON
EARLSCOURT
PARK
DUNDAS
JANE
CITY LIMITS
KEELE
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kilometres

1. 1934-1936

Ross was born in 1917. His father was a unionized printer, a craftsman who became a foreman. From the elite element of the working class his father was self-educated and a militant atheist. He was an anarchist and a book collector. His collection included books on printing, layout, colour work and some first editions of such authors as Oscar Wilde. These were some of the first books to stir Ross's idealism. His father legitimized idealism in Ross's upbringing.

Early on Ross acquired the smell of ink because from a failed business his father had printing presses and type fonts stored in the basement of the house on Grenadier Road, High Park, where he did odd jobs for friends. When he was just a tad Ross ran the Gordon press even though he could hardly reach up to do it.

Ross's mother, a trained stenographer, came from the moderate family of a school principal. Ross was an atheist like his father. But his mother put him into Sunday school near her house in High Park and at the United Church located at Eglinton and Guestville, up the road from his home on Guestville Avenue. Ross carried his

Spartacus Corn Roast, Toronto 1935. Ross is top row center. Murray is front row at right. Sylvia is just behind Murray and to the left.

atheism into the Sunday school. He disturbed the teachers because he would speak up against what they said and get into arguments with them. It was embarrassing to have a kid saying no. They were pleased when he didn't come. They were on his side because they didn't want him there and he didn't want to be there. He was encouraged not to come. Eventually they gave up on him and his mother had to abandon his religious training.

Ross had three brothers and three sisters. By 1934 one brother, Murray, older by two years, had already joined the trotskyist Workers Party while a student at York Memorial Collegiate. Murray and Ross had been fighting for years. After all what could Murray know? Ross wanted to go round where Murray was but Murray didn't want him.

So in late 1934 or early 1935 Ross joined/Murray recruited him anyways. At 17 years of age and a student at York Memo Ross joined the Workers Party. He was inspired by their scientific approach. They explained how the workers could get rid of capitalism and how the young Ross could help. Ross was ready, willing and able to work for communism. And work he did.

Ross, the youngest member of the York Township Branch, listened, observed and helped in elections. He stood on picket lines and sold newspapers. He assisted at open air meetings of the Spartacus Youth at Earlscourt Park and the corner of Weston Road and Eglinton. At one corner meeting he was forced to do the speaking, "Go on you can do it Ross" said Sylvia. He learned to run the duplicator. He went to May Day marches, unemployed demonstrations and attended Party functions.

By January 1935 Ross had joined the WP. As a member he attended an important public meeting of 700 at the Labor Temple on Church Street. Ross distributed leaflets for the meeting and took advantadge of the rally to meet the speaker Maurice Spector. He was explaining the Kirov assassination in the Soviet Union. The assassination opened up Trials which led to Stalin's mass expulsions and executions of Bolsheviks. Spector, the expelled editor of the

Maurice Spector

Communist Party newspaper, had come up from New York where he was editor of the New International magazine. Spector's contribution was missed by the organization in Toronto. He was a brilliant orator, colourful, sophisticated. He was an able person who worked with what he had. Spector was involved in the launching of the York Township Branch and its unemployed work. Spector had continuing relations with individual branch members.

The Workers Party had a wide range of activities, including the Vanguard and a Ukrainian paper. Noteworthy of its seriousness was its sport, including participating in a baseball league.

But the WP was very isolated, although it did have links with Jewish needle trade workers. At Canada Packers where Ross worked in the summer, along with another party member, he tried to help organize a union. The shifts were very tough, seven to seven on nights but the money was good for a kid making a full wage.

Returning to school, Ross got organized at York Memo. At this high school the teachers sympathized with the workers and a couple of teachers were good enough to hold after school classes which encouraged an interest in international affairs. One series in November 1935 was given by a postal worker explaining the history of canadian wealth. Other students were invited to join in the discussion circle which sometimes had up to 15 in attendance at person's homes.

The centre of activities of the York Township Branch was the unemployed. Even as a student Ross was detailed to work with unemployed youth. Most of the Branch was unemployed plus there were some

IN THIS ISSUE: Has the Comintern Learned? / The Turn of the French League

Workers of the World, Unite!

THE VANGUARD

Organ of the Workers' Party of Canada

VOL. 2, ISSUE No. 6 TORONTO, DECEMBER, 1934 FIVE CENTS PER COPY

UNEMPLOYED ORGANIZE!

It is sad fact that during the past four years of the heaviest unemployment in the history of the Dominion there has been no real, functioning mass organization of the unemployed in the City of Toronto. There have been sporadic demonstrations which have been easily broken up by the police. There have been delegations, which engaged the City Mayor Stewart in vigorous cross firing. But that could not cover up the undeniable fact that there was no substantial mobilization of the masses in an unemployed organization that the unemployed could feel was truly their own organization. To be blunt, the responsibility for this state of affairs lay with the crude and hectic rule-or ruin policies of the Stalinist officials who insisted on a hundred percent mechanical, bureaucratic and authoritic domination of the unemployed. Whoever would not see absolutely eye to eye with Stalinism was duly eliminated. As a result both the "block" and "ward" organization of the unemployed under Stalinist auspices were practically a failure.

It is therefore a matter of congratulation that at last the Toronto Unemployed Union has emerged from a series of public meetings at the Labor Temple, and gives promise of becoming a real mass organization. Even the Stalinists were compelled by the evidence of the enthusiastic response of the unemployed, to soft-pedal, and to offer to co-operate.

The sincerity of this offer is yet to be tested in action. It remains to be seen whether they will loyally assist in building up the Toronto Unemployed Union, or whether they will endeavor merely to subordinate it to their so-called "ward organizations" which exist mostly on paper.

So far as the Workers' Party is concerned, we will do everything we can to assist in developing a rank and file organization, based on democratic control, and placing the interests of the masses first and foremost. The fact that several of our unemployed comrades have been elected on the Executive is evidence that the unemployed have confidence in the policies our comrades represent.

The T.U.U. elected as its chairman, W. Kirby, A. Latham as secretary and T. Beard as treasurer. It is proposed to organize the unemployed of the city on a ward basis so that agitation will center around the five relief depots.

The statistics of an "economic recovery" should deceive no unemployed worker. Even during the favorable periods of capitalist production the developing machine technique permanently displaces labor power and lays the basis for the standing army of the unemployed. Capitalism needs this industrial reserve army and can have no interest in its abolition. Hence there can be no fundamental solution to the unemployment problem under capitalism. Nor is the present the former ordinary cycle of hard times. The previous crises were mainly caused by the rapid growth of machine production, and expansion of the national market. But more and more Canadian capitalist economy rests upon the foundation of world economy with its contradictions and crises, military and revolutionary.

Canadian Capitalism is using all its efforts to unload its economic difficulties upon the backs of the workers. It has used the crisis to reduce the standard of living of the workers. Hence it is of the utmost importance to forge a bond of unity between the employed and the unemployed. The newly formed Toronto Unemployed Union has very properly approached the trade unions and the Trades Council for moral financial assistance and placed itself on record as willing to cooperate in opposing the bosses strike-breaking and open shop activities.

Welcome the Last of the Eight!

We greet the release of Tim Buck, the last of the eight comrades sentenced to Kingston Penitentiary under Section 98 of the Criminal Code. Despite our deep political differences and the ridiculous campaign of slander carried on against us by his party associates particularly Sam Carr on his release, that we connived with the Canadian bourgeoisie to keep the comrades incarcerated; like all all other honest workers organizations we joyfully welcome the release of the class war prisoners. The demonstration accorded Tim Buck by the Toronto workers is an indication of the growing consciousness among the masses of the class nature of the capitalist state and the spirit of growing working class militancy.

skilled workers and some students, totalling about 15 members.

There was a vibrant unemployed movement and York Township was its strong centre. The WP played a full part in it. On one occasion in November 1935 unemployed successfully seized the York Township offices

Police and Strikers Clash in East York

Angry Workers Storm Council Chambers

The flying fists of East York unemployed strikers were directed against the police here on Friday November 22nd, resulting in one officer being sent-to hospital. Their anger aroused by the ever-bedging council who had failed to keep an appointment with them, the strikers stormed and took possesion of the council chambers. Immediately, forty county police were dispatched to the scene to attempt to oust the workers, who voluntarily withdrew after the council agreed to a meeting for next morning.

This time the council no doubt realized that the workers would not be bluffed, and were on hand for the meeting The results were that the council was forced to terminate its period of cowardly inactivity, and agreed to go to Queen's Park on Monday the 25th, to negotiate.

Enthusiasm High

As the strike enters its fourth week there has been no sign of weakening; in fact the efforts of the strikers are now redoubled for victory is in sight. From the beginning the strikers have been out 100%, despite some reports to the contrary. Councillor Walker on one occasion stated that 80% of the strikers wanted to return to work One has only to witness the enthusiasm at the overflow meetings of the strikers to find how much truth there is in this.

As evidence of the desperation of the workers, the Strike Committee has in its possession hundreds of eviction notices. The strikers state determinedly that they will not go back to work only to have their families put out on the street in their absence. It is plain to see that they will accept but one settlement — a settlement that meets their demands. Comrades, every class conscious workers is behind you!

Vanguard November 30th 1935

and held the Reeve in his office prisoner for a period. Confrontation works. Also there was a strike of unemployed relief workers. The council withdrew its cuts, trying to buy time.

Unemployed workers were humiliated with vouchers so they could only get clothes at certain stores, hence a uniform

of outcasts. But at one clothes giveway one of the unemployed guys grabbed a tux and then wore it on garbage detail. The big issue was CASH RELIEF not vouchers.

There were endless confrontations with the police who sought to wear down the activists. Unemployed were evicted from their homes. Sometimes there were mass evictions of up to 450. Ross would be amongst the group who'd then take the furniture back in. The Bailiffs would take the furniture out then the activists would take it back in.

Inspired by the June 1935 British Columbia Relief Camp strike, in 1935 and 1936 there were strikes in Toronto of 2000 relief workers centred in York Township. The WP supported the picketing; in June 1936 two unemployed leaders were amongst 19 arrested in midnight raids to try to break the strikes. Ross participated in a march from York Township to Queen's Park. The unemployed wanted regular jobs and not to have to work for relief and specially not garbage work.

One effective action in June 1936 was to take homelessness directly into their own hands and take over a vacant city block sized lot on Bicknell Avenue. They built burrows in the ground to live in with a shack overhead for a roof. There were 29 huts and a kitchen. They organized their own food, obtaining it by whatever method available. The action was spearheaded by 40 single unemployed. In June the York Township Council cut family relief by 10% and 700 single unemployed were cut off entirely. They were expected to share the family welfare. They called a mass strike and erected four rows of shacks known as Red Square. Ross went over

regularly to give support. The burrows were able to stay in use for two months before the police moved in to break it up, although it is still known as Red Square.

Ross actively participated in and liked to go to the unemployed youth meetings at Silverthorn Hall. As one of seven children

MAY DAY

YOUNG WORKERS! ALL OUT ON MAY FIRST!

This is the proudest day in the year for the working class the world over and the most forboding day to the mighty industrial magnates.

In this decisive period of world history, when every day brings us closer to the terrible conflict in which the present rulers of society will try to drown their miserable incapacity and their insatiable greed in the blood of young workers, in this decisive period the laboring youth of the world must organise its ranks and show its might. On this May Day we must in one great voice shout against this merciless machine—Capitalism! This machine though wasteful, old fashoned, unscientific, grinds on relentlessly to imperialist war. But it is not enough to protest against capitalism. We young workers must destroy this monster that we have helped to build. With granaries overflowing,clothing in abundance and luxuries for all, why do we workers allow a few millionaires—50 in Canada—to own the wealth our labor and the labor of our fathers has produced? On this day we must demonstrate the solidarity and unity of working class will against wage labor and private property. We must prepare ourselves to fight with our last drop of blood for Socialism, for the right to enjoy fully that which we create in the sweat of our brow.

What does the future hold for us? During the last 8 years our government has spent 40 million dollars of the National revenue on military equipment. This is the happy future being prepared for the sons and daughters of Canadian workers. The sixth year of the capitalist crisis finds out of a total population of ten million, two million on relief; the rest, more fortunate, barely eke out a living with their lowered wages and ever worsening conditions. Each year thousands of graduates come pouring out of high schools, technical schools and universities, eager for work, but doomed to a life of idleness, to a weary, endless walking of streets, job seeking, waiting in lines. Many will take to crime, others will be attracted by the demagogy of reactionary organisations, to Fascism—anything for a job or the prospect of one. It was just these demoralised sections of the working and middle classes that aided so greatly the victory of Fascism in Europe. But today they are becoming disillusioned, for Fascism can give nothing but concentration camps and now wars.

The "new deals" of Bennett and Hepburn, like that of Roosevelt, can do nothing but postpone the inevitable. This system of capitalism is outlived, threadbare and cracking at a hundred seams. It cannot be mended. The working class, especially its liveliest section the youth, must organize itself, join hands with its brothers in every country and put an end now and for all time to wage slavery. Only workers' power can give us Socialism. And that power can be attained only by the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. What is immediately necessary in Canada is a revolutionary party and a revolutionary youth league. Both social reformism and Stalinism have failed in this task and have become a brake on the revolutionary advance of the labor movement. The crying need of the toiling masses is the organisation of a new revolutionary international that will lead them in their struggles against capitalism. This is the task to which we young communists of the Spartacus Youth League have pledged ourselves.

We must not underestimate the responsibility that lies on our shoulders. We are in a very critical period in the history of the working class and all mankind. The working class youth must rise above its capitalist-instilled prejudices, against passivity and inertia, join the the working class movement, join the Spartacus Youth League, and throw in all the courage, determination, self-sacrifice it possesses, into the struggle for the abolition of exploitation of man by man, forthe creation of a new social order.

For in the words of the great hero of the revolutionary working class youth, Karl Liebknecht, "Spartacus means fire and spirit, means soul and heart, means will and deed for the proletarian revolution. And Spartacus — means all need and striving for happiness, all fighting determination of the class-conscious proletariat for struggle. For Spartacus means — Socialism and world revolution."

ISSUED BY THE PROVISIONAL NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Spartacus Youth League of Canada

320 SPADINA AVENUE TORONTO, ONTARIO

Ross had a stripped down diet of barley soup, beans, bread and jam. After the meetings Ross and sometimes a few others would adjourn to the home of an unemployed friend who lived across the road for discussions and to feast on baked goods.

Around this time fascists held a meeting at Weston Road and Eglinton. Ross went with 10 comrades attempting to break up the meeting. They got up in the hall, disrupted and were thrown down the stairs.

In the spring of 1936 mass expulsions took place from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Moscow Trials were on. They marked a war against trotskyism in every country. A whole new era of thuggery and assault was opening up. In Canada trotskyist paper salesmen were chased away by goon squads and sometimes beaten up. It was an atmosphere of viciousness which legitimized the killing of trotskyists.

Trotskyists were labelled by the CPs as agents of Hitler and the Mikado. There was a campaign against the Workers Party to isolate it. It was able to function only with increased difficulty.

At the same time Jack Macdonald, the expelled General Secretary of the CP, the leading figure of the WP, was tired and ill. It could be seen in his face. He died in 1941 at 53 years age. Macdonald, who spoke with a noticeable Scottish accent, was highly respected in workers circles. He exuded confidence to workers. He was a proletarian spokesman with a long tradition in the working class. The young Ross would never get to know him.

In June 1936 Ross completed senior matriculation. He passed a full program of Upper School Exams, finished high school and went to work.

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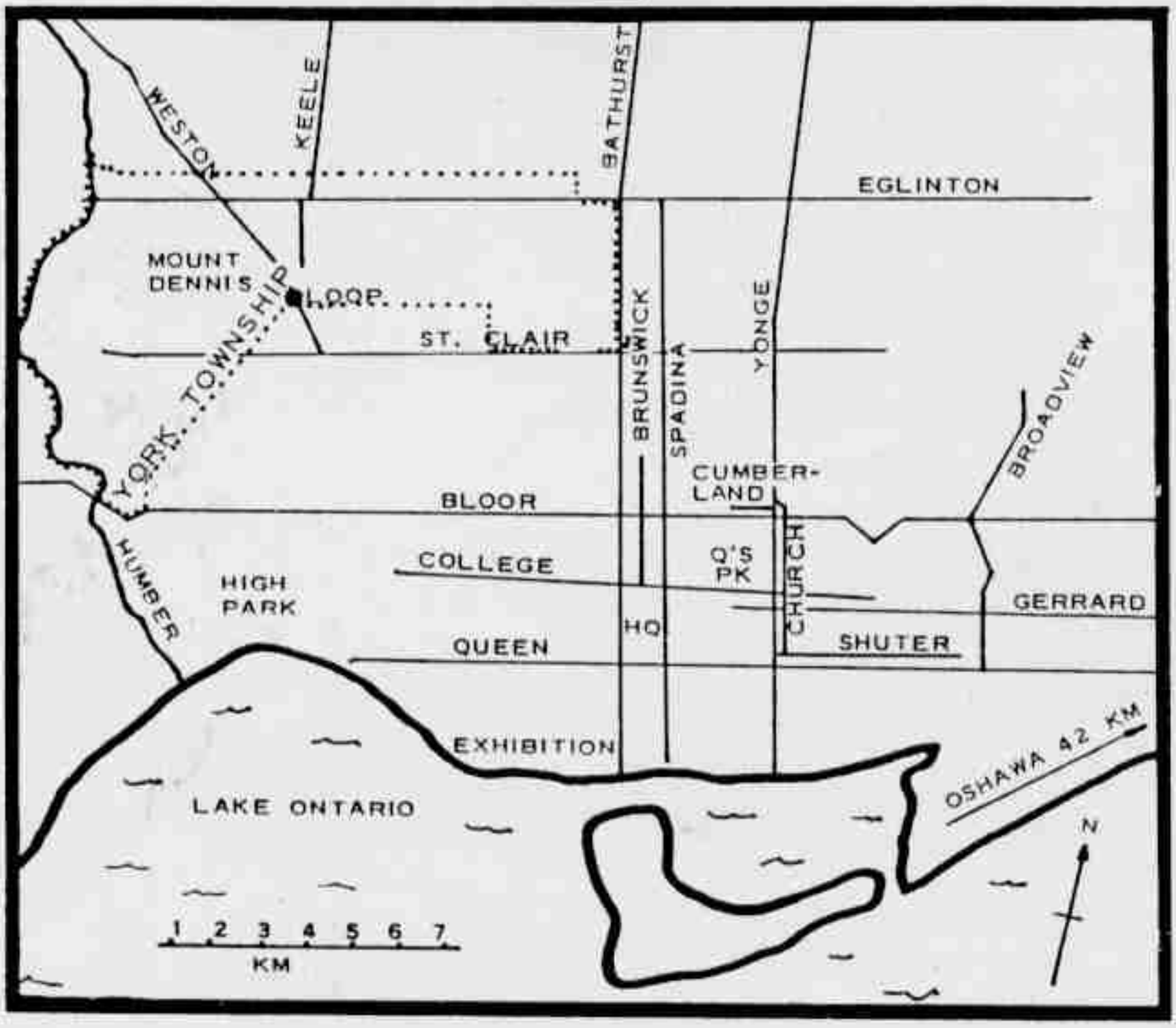
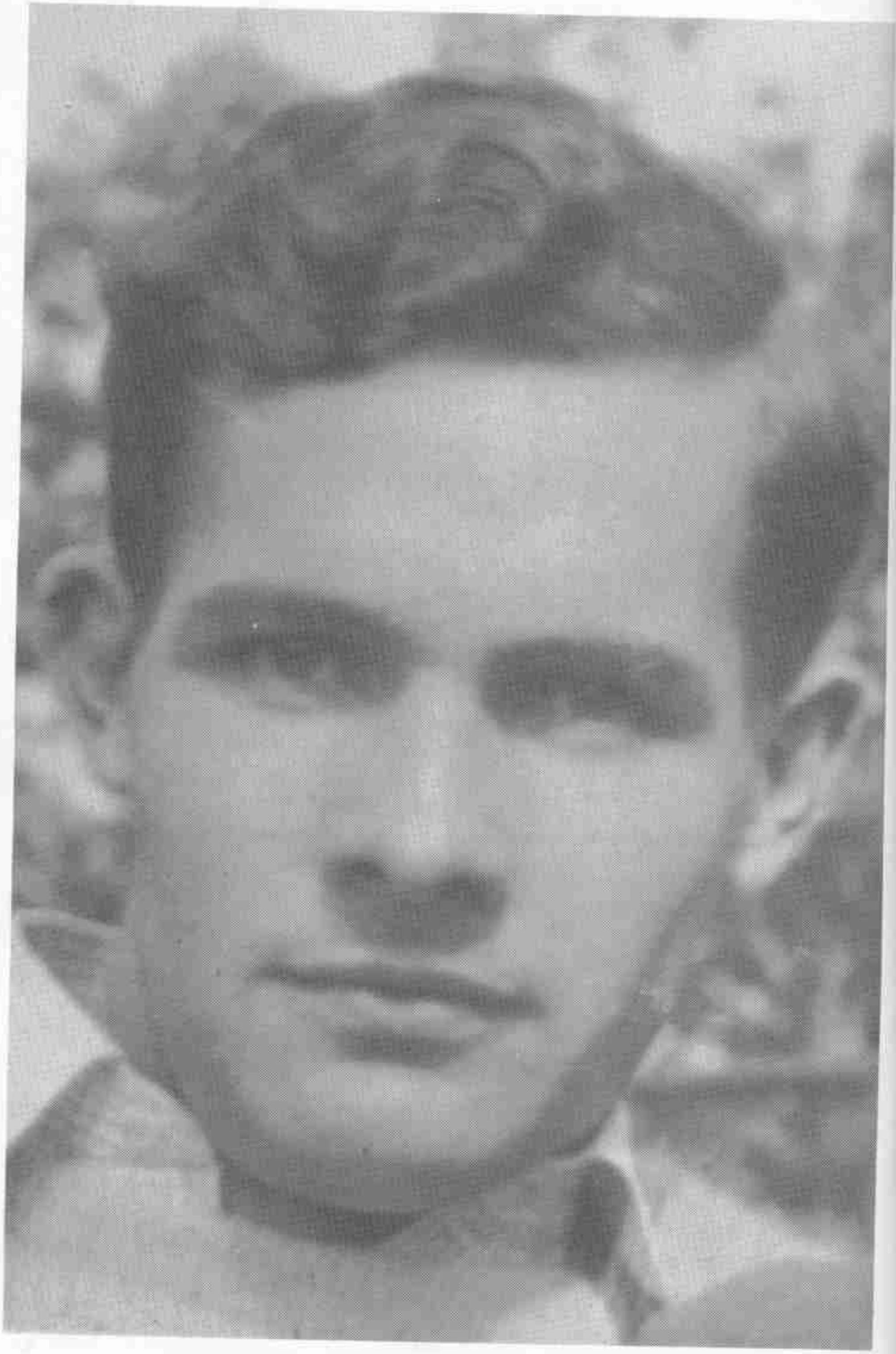


2. 1936-1939

After finishing school Ross worked at various jobs. For a while for instance he was a shipper. Also he kept busy collecting money for revolutionists in Spain. He discussed political differences with a small anarchist group when it attended WP meetings. Aid to Spain was a big issue. The Stalinists wanted to send beans. Ross wanted to send guns.

Around this time he attended a meeting of Bukharin's supporters held at Cumber-

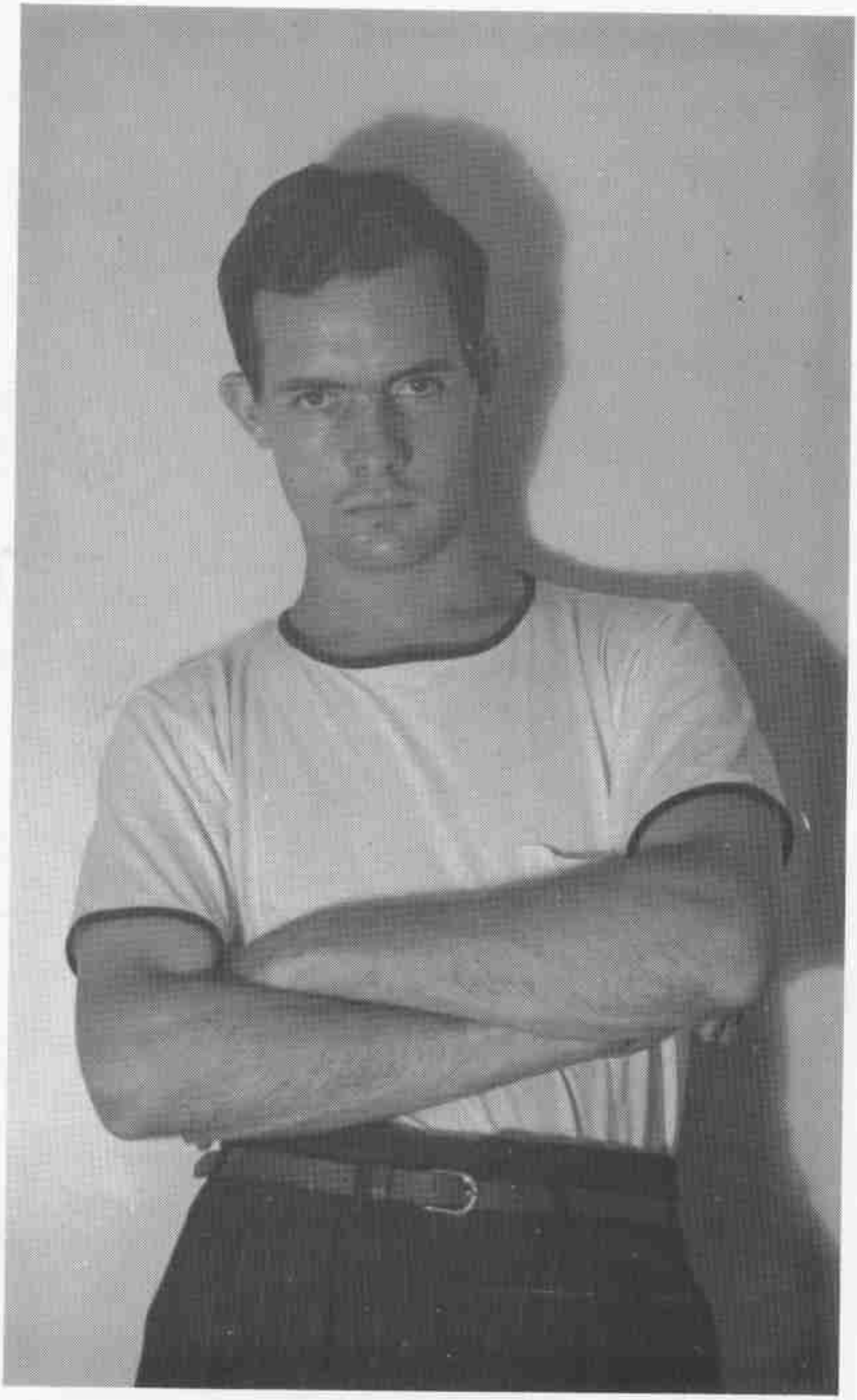


land Hall near Bloor and Yonge. Lovestone, who became a fink in the American Federation of Labor, was the speaker. One time a top leader of the American CP he was speaking on the Moscow Trials. Ross was extremely nervous. This was an internationally known speaker and he had never done this kind of thing before. Nobody else exposed Lovestone so Ross got up to defend Trotsky.

In 1935 and 1936 the WP began to discuss entry into the CCF. The French trotskyists had previously undertaken the highly controversial tactic of entry into the Socialist Party of France. The American trotskyists entered the SP in June 1936 and this affected the WPC which had hitherto been established as branches of the Communist League of America.

Ross attended downtown branch meetings on Sundays. He met a few of the younger members. It was at these meetings that the arguments were held over entry. In order for the York Township members to get home they would have to break up the meetings. Ross took the Weston Road streetcar to the Northlands loop. After 12.30 there was no streetcar transfer at the loop which marked the city limits. So he used to walk home from the loop.

Forays were made to scout and make connections in the CCF. Ross was asked to record some of his experiences. He went in to build from scratch a CCF Youth Movement group in York Township. He made progress and recruited some people. It was hard unpleasant work for a revolutionist. The whole atmosphere was stifling. It was full of bureaucratic maneuvring and blatant careerism. It was unlike the WP which was alive with dynamic self-sacrificing and



stimulating persons. Some members were scandalized by what he was trying to do. Ross wanted to see how the clock ticked, what the possibilities were. He found it rather difficult where people treated him as if he was a spy.

The CCYM killed the club. Better to have no club than have Ross. The executive refused to recognize the club unless they would expel Ross, the founder. He was. After Ross appeared at the Provincial Executive, Fred Dowling, commented bizarrely "I hope you won't be discouraged by this." Like Dowling other CCYM leaders went on to become part of the officialdom of trade unions.

Ross was repulsed by the CCF. It was rife with manipulation; a swamp. He concluded that the CCYM provided no openings for revolutionists. Like any other experience Ross knew that as a bolshevik he had to make the most of whatever experience he was fortunate enough to go through.

He wrote a document/report of experiences in the CCYM for the WP discussions. Spartacus Youth decided to enter the CCYM in June on a vote of 17 for, 15 against. Work was not really begun until September. The morale of the organization on the whole is very poor. When the question of working towards a split from the CCYM was brought up and voted upon, the vote was 10 for, 8 against. Many of those who are in the CCYM have been attending CCYM meetings very irregularly.

The Workers Party had several months of bitter internal friction over the entry. This led to a convention at which Ross was one of the delegates. The entry was supported by Macdonald. The convention voted by 35 to 20 to enter the CCF and in May

1937 entry as individuals was agreed with the CCF brass and the WP was dissolved. The bitterness of the dispute carried on after the entry. The minority boycotted. There were really two groups now. Macdonald became completely inactive. The entry had a large component of defeatism. It was premised on developing a left wing but no such animal existed in any case. The WP was having a hard time. The entry ran concurrent with its paralysis and disintegration.

In the spring of 1937 Ross jumped in a car with a bunch of comrades at the weekend to support the picket line of striking Oshawa autoworkers. The strike established industrial unionism, the CIO in factories in Canada. The government sent in mounted police, "Hepburn's Hussars" to try to break the strike and vowed it would stop the CIO at the border but the strike was solid.

In 1937 Ross kept in contact. He went to educational meetings when they would occur. Around this time he helped to organize the John Reed Club at the Workmen's Circle. He was the only goy in the circle. He got some welcome sleep. He played tennis and had enough gall to challenge for the Ontario championships and lasted three rounds.

The HQ of the Workers Party were at 320 Spadina. In order to get into the HQ it was necessary to go thru a part of the Ukrainian trotskyists printshop where the comps handset the type. There were shelves of type fonts. The Vanguard and the Ukrainian paper were set there. But the collapse of the downtown branch was disastrous. When a comrade went down to the HQ in this period he found everything going

into the furnace. Ross, already expelled from the CCF, was in limbo. So too were a number of Spartacus Youth, excluded from the CCF.

At Christmas 1937/1938 Ross hitch-hiked to Chicago, USA (see map page 3) with a comrade to attend the American trotskyists convention on the occasion of their split from the SP. A Canadian Commission was held designed to bring about the unification and reconstituion of the group from its state of decay. The commission, at which Ross was one of the representatives of the minority, called for, "the fusion of the majority comrades with the active nucleus of the minority. Canadian comrades should concentrate their main efforts on work within the CCF with a view to climaxing entry at or around the fall national convention of the CCF."

There was a continuing dispute throughout 1938. There were more meetings, more submissions. The majority showed resistance to leaving the CCF and a fusion with the minority, the two issues being closely connected.

Ross was still a kid, he didn't know what was going on, inexperienced, he did want to see unity. The commission was composed of competent people, more competent than him. Ross signed the document to resolve to attempt to work together. As loyal members the anti-entry group committed itself to regroup. The minority was at odd ends, though it got together informally sometimes.

During the summer Ross was at an anti-fascist demo at Massey Hall on Shuter Street just east of Yonge. There were arrests and a street fight. Police broke up the counter demonstration.

In 1938 Ross landed a job as an office worker at Kodak. In September the international trotskyists conference held a Canadian Commission urging "any delay in break with the bureaucracy of the CCF is exceedingly harmful ... end to unprofitable existence in the CCF."

Meanwhile Ross's father had stopped working. He decided he wasn't going to work anymore. So Ross is working at Kodak and helping to support the family of 8. Only two are working, he and a sister. He knew, everybody knew the war is coming. So when the war is coming you know there is going to a massive explosion of industrial production of war materiel.

After the entry the WP dissolved. It revived under some intellectuals. The anti-entry forces like Ross tended to away for a while though Ross participated in a mass anti-fascist demo on Bloor Street at Bathurst. A lot of different groups were involved. The street was jammed and the meeting blocked.

Finally in December 1938 the majority was expelled from the CCF and it was decided to launch the Socialist Workers League. A printed paper was put out. It was difficult to sell subscriptions. The paper attacked the war, opposing the Stalinists and was largely oriented to recruiting from the crisis-ridden CP as war loomed. Ross was skeptical about this orientation. He had just come thru a fight over their CCF orientation. He was maturing, at 21 years of age.

Meanwhile in the summer of 1939 the SWL was a central part of the lead of another strike of 2000 unemployed relief workers centering in York Township. They demanded restoration of relief cuts, retention of

single unemployed relief and work at trade union wages.

The Stalin/Hitler Pact in August 1939 opened the war. It had a staggering impact amongst Jewish workers in the needle trades.

WAR OR PEACE

WORKERS OF CANADA! TODAY, AS IN 1914, YOU ARE BEING BETRAYED INTO WAR!

The Dominion Committee of the Canadian Communist Party (*Clarion*, Aug. 26)

LIES when it says this will be "a just war . . . a war in defense of democracy".

The TRUTH is that the imperialist bosses of Britain and France want to protect their profitable colonies by crushing their German-Italian rivals now.

The TRUTH is that "democracy" has never existed in their colonies and NO LONGER EXISTS IN BRITAIN OR FRANCE.

The *Clarion* editor (Aug. 26)

BETRAYS when he asks you to "defend the independence of Poland and preserve peace".

The TRUTH is that the Polish masses have no independence. They are ruled by reactionary landlords and army officers who have massacred Jews, outlawed the Communist Party, and deprived the millions of Ukrainians and other minorities of democratic rights.

The TRUTH is that only hypocrites talk of "preserving" peace by making war.

The Communist Party leadership

LIES when it says "the national security and territorial safety of Canada is imperilled" —

The TRUTH is that the Tim Bucks are aiding the Colonel Drews in fomenting a war hysteria —

CONFUSES when it blames Chamberlain for encouraging Hitler.

The TRUTH is that IT WAS STALIN WHO HASTENED THE CRISIS BY GIVING HITLER THE GO-AHEAD SIGNAL —

CONCEALS when it says the Stalin-Hitler deals are simple non-aggression and trade pacts.

The TRUTH is that Russia is commited to supplying Hitler with materials and REFUSING MATERIALS TO POLAND when war comes between them. Read article 2 of the "non-aggression pact (*not* printed in the *Clarion*).

The TRUTH is that STALIN has sabotaged his own fake "peace front" with the "democratic peace-loving countries".

The TRUTH is that TROTSKY WAS RIGHT when last October he predicted a treacherous deal between the Kremlin bureaucracy and the Nazis.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

The Third International is dead. In Canada its leaders join with CCF leaders in preparing for enlistment in the army of the bosses.

BUT THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL LIVES. Its Canadian section, the Socialist Workers League, calls for ENLISTMENT IN THE RANKS OF THE WORKERS in RESISTANCE to the coming war.

The CP's Dominion Committee demands that King declare for war without waiting for Parliament.

We stand for strike, boycott and other forms of organized independent working-class resistance to Canadian participation in the war.

We stand for the continued struggle to overthrow capitalism, against the main enemy, our own capitalists.

We stand for solidarity with the workers of Germany and Italy, against their fascist overlords. We declare that they will be aided in overthrowing their own governments by our fight here at home. We can not make socialists of them by shooting them.

CANADIAN WORKERS EVERYWHERE! JOIN WITH US IN BUILDING THE CANADIAN ANTI-WAR PARTY!

ONLY SOCIALISM CAN END WAR!

THE FIGHT FOR WORKING CLASS FREEDOM IS THE FIGHT AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR!

To get in touch with us write Box 185, Toronto.

ISSUED BY THE SOCIALIST WORKERS LEAGUE
CANADIAN SECTION OF THE 4TH INTERNATIONAL

PRINTED BY VOLUNTARY LABOUR

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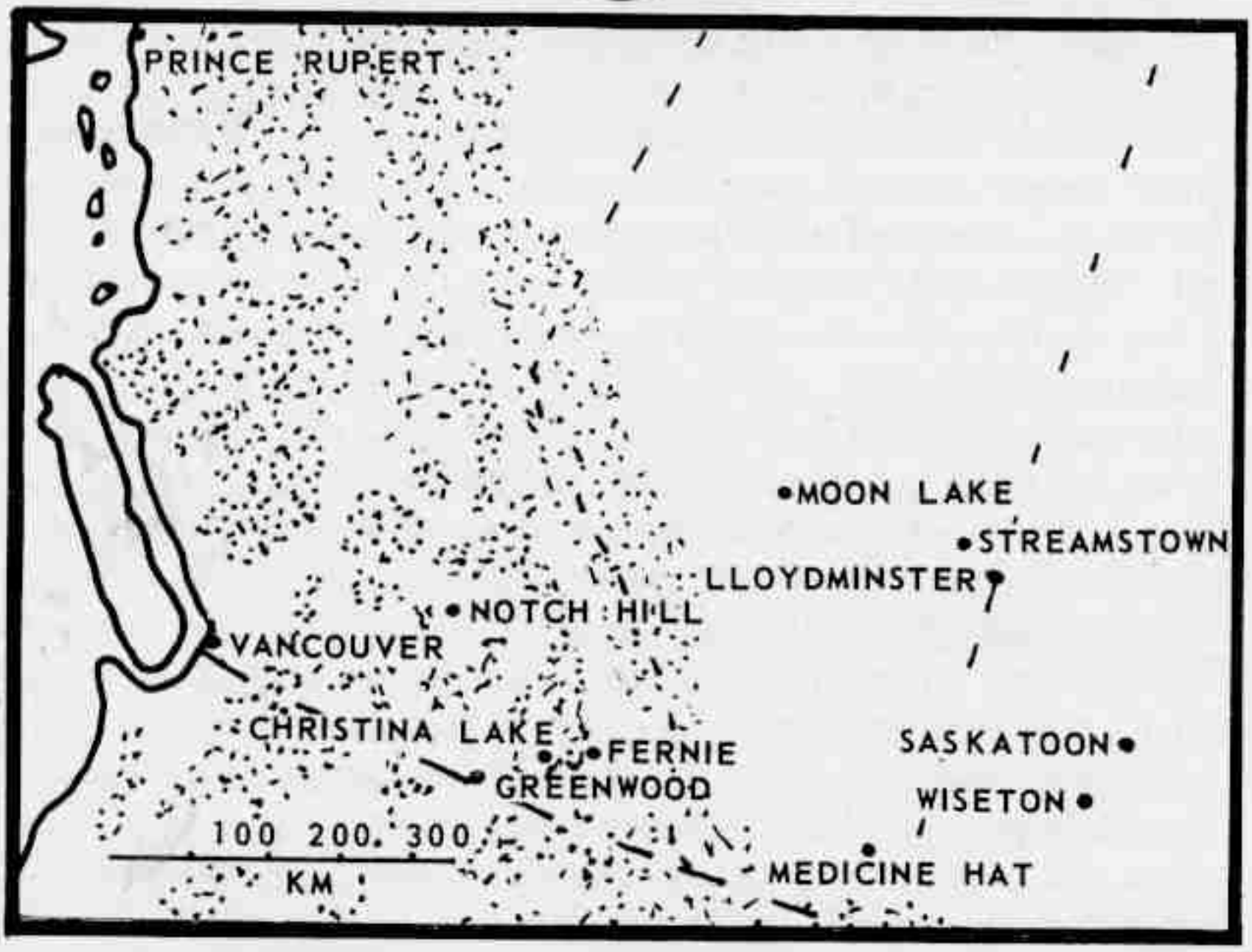


3. 1939-1942

On September 1st German armed forces invaded Poland as part of the Stalin-Hitler Pact. With the begining of WWII Printers would not handle the SWL paper so they put it out themselves, clandestine, on an old multi. The police were promoting persons to phone in reporting anybody who said anything against the war. The slime press reported people being picked up for saying to hell with king.

In September the League decided to organize a public meeting on opposition to the war with the main speaker a newly-arrived Englishman, Frank Watson. It was

held on the street corner at Brunswick and College. Watson was arrested at the meeting with sixty persons watching. Watson was jailed for speaking against the war. He was the first person prosecuted under the new regulations.

Ross wasn't at the gathering. Watson had just come to Toronto. Watson was a vigorous anti-fascist and a staunch opponent of WWII. It would appear the league wanted the protest to spark broader protests in opposition to the war but it did not. Ross objected to the martyr setup. He thought the whole project ill-advised.

Ross went down to visit Watson at Don Jail on Gerrard Street at Broadview. Ross took him some books and immediately began to raise money to pay the fine. Watson got out till the trial. The SWL was banned, underground but a defence committee was launched, gained some support in some of the unions and gave publicity to the Watson case amid intensified censorship. Watson was sentenced to six months plus three hundred dollars fine or six months more.

League activity continued. The intellectuals deserted leaving a handful of the ranks, including Ross to fend for themselves. Ross took his direction from Trotsky, whose murder in Mexico by Stalin in 1940, staggered Ross. The group tried to distribute its newspaper by circulating it amongst acquaintances and such means as inserting it into library books. They went up to tall buildings like in between the stores at Queen and Yonge, dropping papers on the crowd in the streets below. Ross became fully involved in publication of the modest paper. Writing for the paper he began to understand the programme for the first time. The paper was largely put out

to hold the group together. Ross edited a couple of issues before it folded in June 1942.

In the summer of 1941 the SWL decided its handful of members and sympathizers should get jobs in basic industry. Ross finished up at Kodak and took a course on machine shop work in order to reorient his life to becoming active in a union. But he could not get a job in a big unionized outfit without presenting army discharge papers. Industrial unions in the factories really began to take hold in WWII. The league was in chaos. Ross got a job as a supposed tool and die maker at one of the many small shops taking on army contracts.

At this time it was decided Ross was to make a trip across Canada to pull the connections together, to renew the broken lines. So Ross went West. There was no Trans-Canada Highway then. He hitch-hiked to Sault Ste Mare (see map page 3). From there he took a boat across Lake Superior to the Lakehead, hitch-hiking from there.

His first destination was Saskatchewan where there were people to see. There's no traffic on the prairie roads. If you don't take the first thing to come along, you do not get there. He would not see anybody for hours.

His first stop was Wiseton, Saskatchewan where he met a comrade. It is in the middle of the prairies. Then he went on to Saskatoon. Remarkable people, veterans of previous class battles, but largely in isolation now.

Then on to Lloydminster on the Alberta border. He arrived at the height of a torrential storm that blocked him from reaching his objective -- Streamstown. The road had been washed out and would not possibly

be open for several days. Ross had never been out West before. He had no idea of the vastness. It is sparsely populated, undeveloped. There were whole gaps where he had not leads. He had touches of loneliness in the middle of the war, tumultuous events going on.

Ross went to Medicine Hat to see an uncle who gave him a meal and a few dol- dollars. He went thru the Rockie mountains at Fernie. Suddenly he came onto a main street of a community with false fronts as in a Western movie. It seemed the town was deserted. But there were little kids running about. These were the Japanese who'd been ripped out of British Columbia. The women and children, separated from their husbands were here in Greenwood, B.C. The local mines were shut. The car went on.

At Christina Lake in B.C. he contacted a woman and her husband who had been a leading activist in the CP. She was a real house of fire, a plebian, a nurse. She was inspired by the efforts to rebuild the trotskyist movement.

Ross made it to a couple more places. There were a scattering of contacts. In one area he had to go over the mountain ranges to get to the B.C. coast, then up and down again, dangerous as hell. Another time he got a ride from a guy stewed to the gills. There were bears and wildlife about. Ross thought he'd never make it.

He went to Notch Hill on Lake Shushwa. This guy had built his own wooden house on the lake shore. He was a Swede. He married the teacher in the local schoolhouse and had a large family. They were widely respected in the community. Everyone in the family played a musical instrument so they had their own band. They farmed on the

hillside overlooking the lake. They organized a meeting for Ross as they had for leading CCFers. The meeting was held in the schoolhouse with quite a crowd. Some 25 jammed the benches to hear Dowson explain opposition to WWII and project revolutions which would result from it.

So Ross made it to Vancouver. He headed straight to meet Paddy Stanton who had run a newstand on a central street corner carrying the boss press and also trotskyist literature. Paddy Stanton played a role in opposing the no-strike pledge. The working class did not accept the no-strike pledge that was being pushed by the CP.

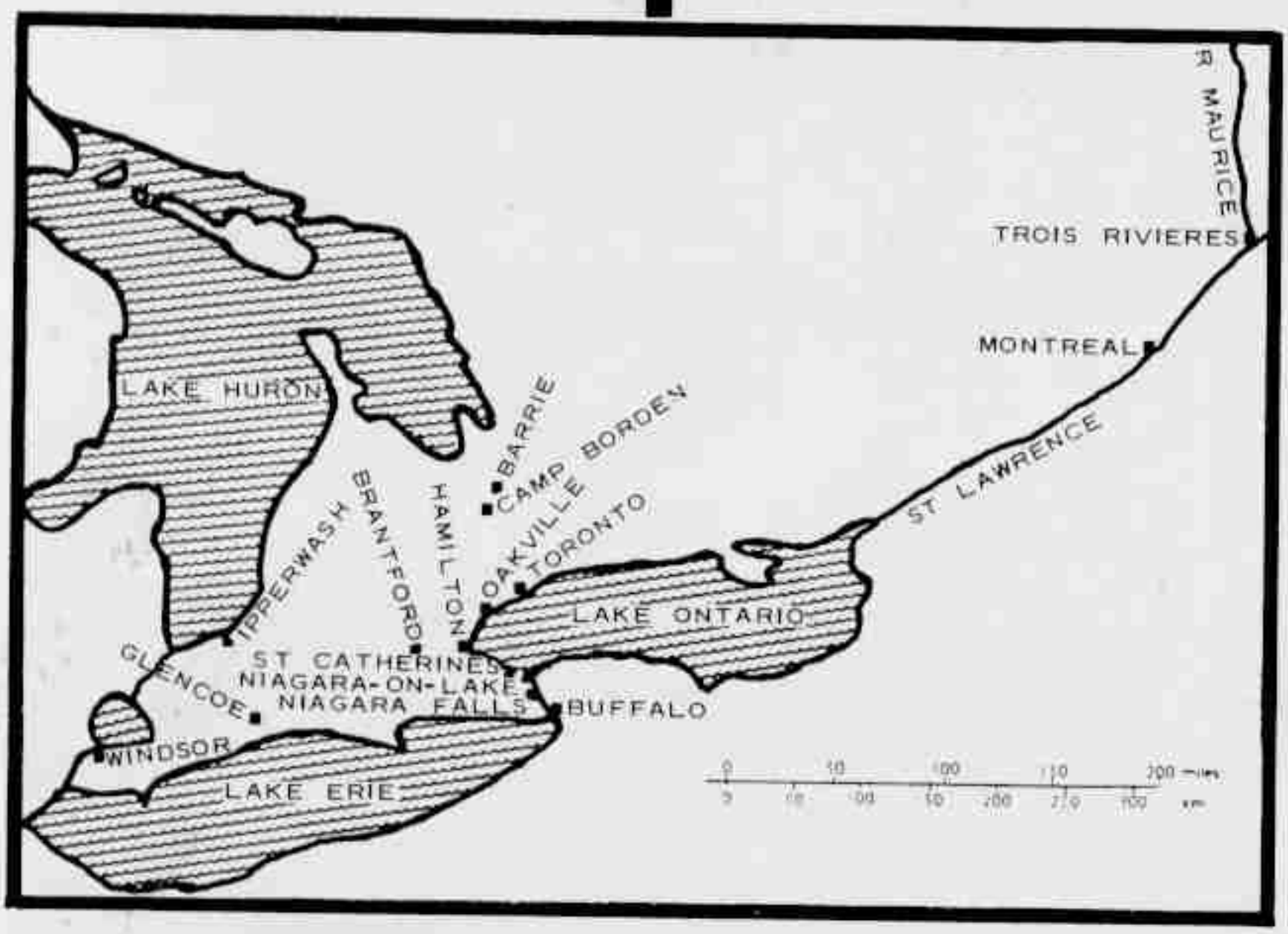
Stanton was known to everybody. They went to the Stanley Park CCF club, all the radicals went there. Ross spoke at a couple of their forums. The Vancouver group had never left the CCF. They were part of it, left wingers.

The CCF left was part of the White Lunch gang. These were cheap food stores in Vancouver where revolutionists got a good welcome with their cup of coffee. Paddy had been a Wobblie, always a mark of real distinction. Ross met the other members of the league. It was operating as a marxist group in the CCF. The CCF discussions were unsatisfactory. The CCF was affecting the SWL.

Ross spent a month in Vancouver working and talking to the group. A branch meeting was held and correspondence was set up and relations reestablished.

Ross hitch-hiked back to Toronto. He attended the funeral of Jack Macdonald. There was a large crowd present. In the summer of 1942 Ross enlisted in the army.

4



4, 1942-1945

When first called up he was put in rejection category E on the testimony of his family doctor. On his return from the West he found himself unable to obtain jobs he had prepared for on the grounds that he could not present an armed forces rejection slip. Assuming he really was in category E he volunteered in order to get the slip. To his surprise he was accepted in August 1942. So at 25 years of age he was dispatched for training to Brantford and

DAWSON
CAMP BORDEN, ONT. NOVB. 1942.

Paddy Stanton, on left, in Prince Rupert.

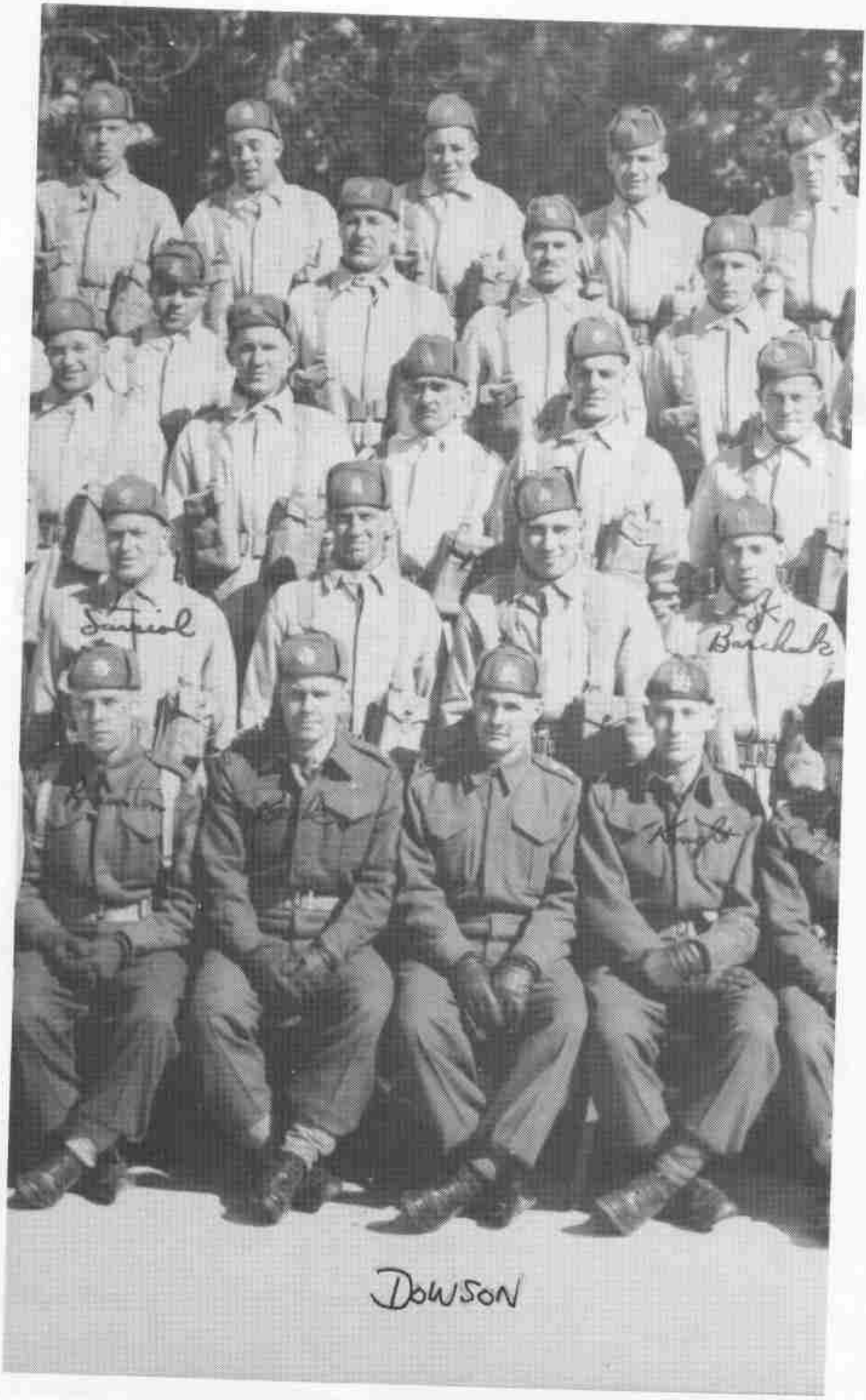
then to Camp Borden near Barrie.

There he progressed from a private to a corporal. He was adjusting to being in the infantry. He was reading, mostly WWI anti-war books. While on leave he participated in Toronto League meetings.

In the army he met CP members. They were super patriots. They hobnobbed at army functions. They were across the road in the tank corps. The CPer in Ross's regiment was a well-meaning guy who could not understand Ross's opposition to the war. Ross didn't run into the CPers much in town with his army friends.

As a corporal Ross was a small arms instructor. As an opponent of the war he wanted to know the skills of modern war. Shortly he was offered a Commission. A number of those with whom he took his advanced training were killed in the July 1943 invasion of Sicily.

In September 1943 Ross started a one month officers training course for the rank of lieutenant. The camp was at Trois Rivieres. Here the army had taken over an extravagant fair grounds that had a swimming pool, a place to display cattle etc. The area was industrial, with paper and textile mills at the confluence of two mighty rivers. The entire Quebec community was hostile to the army. Ross had heard about conditions in Quebec but had never seen such slums as skirted Trois Rivieres where housing was actually primitive shacks made out of flattened tin cans. They spoke French, the officers English. Ross had enough French to go to restaurants in town where he ate sometimes for a treat. Quebecois did not see the war as theirs. There was evidence of opposition in every place. Up to this point



1944

only those who volunteered were being sent overseas. Conscripts were limited to service within Canada, Newfoundland, Labrador and the Alleutians.

Ross attended a gathering of the SWL in Montreal. There was a tiny functioning group there, including a couple of workers in the machine trades.

In October 1943 Ross completed his officers training and was assigned as infantry training officer at Camp Borden again. There he got his second pip. As an officer he always had good food even when others did not. The life of a training officer at Camp Borden was one of routine. Ross was breaking his ass on route marches.

Meanwhile he was resigning his commission. At the same time the league was try- to reorganize. An effective leaflet was published for May Day 1944.

A letter from an army pal in May 1944 illustrates Ross's situation,

"It is begining to look as if the authorities have decided that it would be wiser for them to retain you in the army as an officer than to allow you your freedom as an other rank. It may be that they think that in that way they can keep you muzzled more effectively. Though on the other hand it may only be the bureaucratic inefficiency of the powers that be. I hope that you will be able to get your own way in this matter. Have you considered going on a sit-down strike to achieve your ends?"

The army brass took no action on accepting his resignation. His officer tried various threats and promises, including offering him a higher rank, captain. At that time they were overwhelmed with a flood of officers who they had trained for

MAY DAY MANIFESTO

SOCIALIST WORKERS' LEAGUE

CANADIAN SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

MAY 1, 1944.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

MAY DAY, 1944, the fifth MAY DAY of the second imperialist war finds the workers of Canada still and passive, overwhelmed by the capitalist war machine and betrayed by their leaders. While the workers are regimented in their jobs and afraid to speak what is in their minds, the bosses are attempting, through the wage freeze and unbearable tax burdens, to make the workers pay the whole cost of the war. While the living standards of the masses steadily decline, while they are paralysed by the treacherous policy of the trade union bureaucracy, the captalist class grows fat on soaring profits, "cost-plus" contracts and government subsidies drawn from the pockets of the workers. The campaign of lies and slander against the CCF is, in reality, only the opening gun in a general campaign against all labour and against the TRADE UNION movement. Frightened by the growing power of the workers as revealed in C.C.F gains, the capitalist class is consolidating its position for a final assault on the living standards and democratic rights of the masses,- after the war. For the bosses,- continuing profits and more intensive exploitation of the workers.
For the workers themselves, piece work, company unionism, unemployment and pogey.

MIS-LEADERS OF LABOUR

MAY DAY, the day dedicated to the international solidarity of the working class, will pass unnoticed by the mis-leaders of labour the Labour Progressive Party and the CCF. The former act as strike breakers and are now 100% supporters of capitalism. Their slogan of "national unity" means - unity with the exploiters and war mongers. The CCF has abanboned the Regina Manifesto and has forgotten its muddle headed pacifism of the pre-war years: it silently aids and abets the labour bureaucrats in organising the workers for the imperialist slaughter. Its leaders are in the process of forgetting ther radicalism as the plums of parliamentary office come almost within their grasp. To the foul slanders of the capitalists they reply with speeches to Rotary Clubs and other organizations of the bosses where they try to prove that they are really no threat to the bosses' position.

THE ONLY ROAD

Hamstrung on the economic front, faced with the betrayal of their political leaders, the militants in the labour movement are coming slowly but surely and with ever increasing tempo towards the position of the Fourth International. This is the only road for the Canadian workers - the road of International Socialism. Without it their will be no peace. Without it there will be no jobs.

THE IMPERILIST WAR

On the shores of England, the finest section of the Canadian working class are poised for the invasion of Europe. What this will mean has already been made clear in North Africa and Italy where the "democrats" have entered into pacts with Vichy-ites, fascists, reactionaries of all stripes. The smoke screen of the Four Freedoms has evaporated in the face of the realities of imperialist power politics. At Quebec, Cairo and Teheran the leaders of the so-called United Nations with a behaviour worthy only of Oriental despots have laid secret plans for the division of the plunder. But already the fictitous unity of the allies is breaking down. American and English capitalists quarrel over international airways over oil rights in Arabia, while the Kremlin burocracy pursues its own contradictory aims.

On one point all the warring countries, Axis and Allied alike, are agreed--the suppression of the worker's revolution in Europe and Asia. From this flows the collaboration with the reactionnaries Darlan, Giraud and DeGaulle in North Africa and with the fascist Badoglio in Italy. The axis sim Stalin committed himself at Teheran. (over)

THE COMING REVOLUTIONS

A force greater than the vaunted power of the imperialists, rotten with internal decay, will say the final word. As a result of the heroic struggle of the Red Army and the Soviet workers in defence of the gains of the October Revolution, the fascist war machine is fast weakening. Already the forces of socialist revolution are on the march in Europe. On the eve of the invasion, England, one of the most powerful of the imperialist nations, is torn apart with militant strikes against the bosses and against the Bevins and Morrisons, the fakers and class collaborationists of the Labour Party. In Italy the revolution is held in check only by Anglo-American guns in the south and German guns in the north, aided by Allied bombing of the workers' quarters in Milan and Turin. A manifesto issued at Bari by the Communist Internationalist Party (Fourth International) calls for a militant struggle against "democratic" and fascist imperialists alike. In Germany, in spite of ten years of fascist terrorism, a new revolutionary communist centre is being organised. To the fascist "NEW ORDER", to the plans of the allies for reactionary and semi-fascist regimes supported by allied bayonets, the workers of the world counterpose the slogan, United Socialist States of Europe.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

In all countries the capitalists strike first at the vanguard of the workers the inheritors of the traditions of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, the Fourth International. In the United States, eighteen trade unionists and leaders of the Socialist Workers' Party were sentenced to prison on the day of Pearl Harbour. In England, on orders from Morrison (who ordered the release of the fascist Mosley) the offices of the Revolutionary Communist Party (Fourth International) were raided and their files seized. In Japan, the government has suppressed food riots, dissolved the Japanese Farmer's Union and forcibly broken up a mass meeting of the Japanese Worker's Party of Tokyo

Lashed by unbearable internal contradictions, capitalism is driving the whole world to the edge of the abyss. In all countries the workers die in droves while the profits of the bosses continue to rise. It will end only when the workers of Great Britain and Germany, of the United States and Japan extend to each other and to the workers of the Soviet Union the hand of comradeship and drown the barbaric roar of imperialist cannons and bombing planes with the cry:

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

DOWN WITH THE IMPERIALIST WAR!

FOR SOLIDARITY WITH THE WORKERS OF EUROPE UNDER THE FASCIST YOKE!

ALL AID TO THE INDIAN, CHINESE AND COLONIAL PEOPLES

FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET UNION AGAINST IMPERIALIST ATTACK!

FORWARD TO SOCIALISM UNDER THE BANNER OF MARX, LENIN AND TROTSKY!

LONG LIVE THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!

espected casualties that were not happening yet. They confronted these officers with the opportunity to be transferred to the British army which was suffering heavy casualties ever since Dunkirk and the opening of the North African campaign.

These officers who had been harassing conscripts to volunteer for overseas service and themselves were being enticed to transfer with the higher Canadian rate of pay and flattery that they would have higher status than the British officer equivalent, cooly rejected every blandishment and remained officers without a command.

Ross was continuing to press for acceptance of his resignation. The brass continued to stall leaving him with his regular consignment of infantry training at Borden. Then he was transferred to serve as officer of the day at Stanley Barracks at the Exhibition Grounds in Toronto (see map chapter two).

But finally the release came through in September 1944.

In October the SWL held a national conference in Montreal to relaunch the group. Represented were about 15 members in Toronto, 2 in Niagara Falls, 15 in Vancouver, 2 in Prince Rupert, 2 in Ottawa, 4 in Montreal and a scattering in other places such as Saskatchewan. A legal paper was projected which began publication later in June 1945. Ross was elected national secretary pending a recall to the army.

With his recall as a private he was sent to the manning pool in the Horse Palace on the Exhibition Grounds. Meanwhile the government passed legislation making all the armed forces eligible for overseas service and in the face of sporadic pro-

tests started a massive movement of troops from the West towards Halifax and beyond.

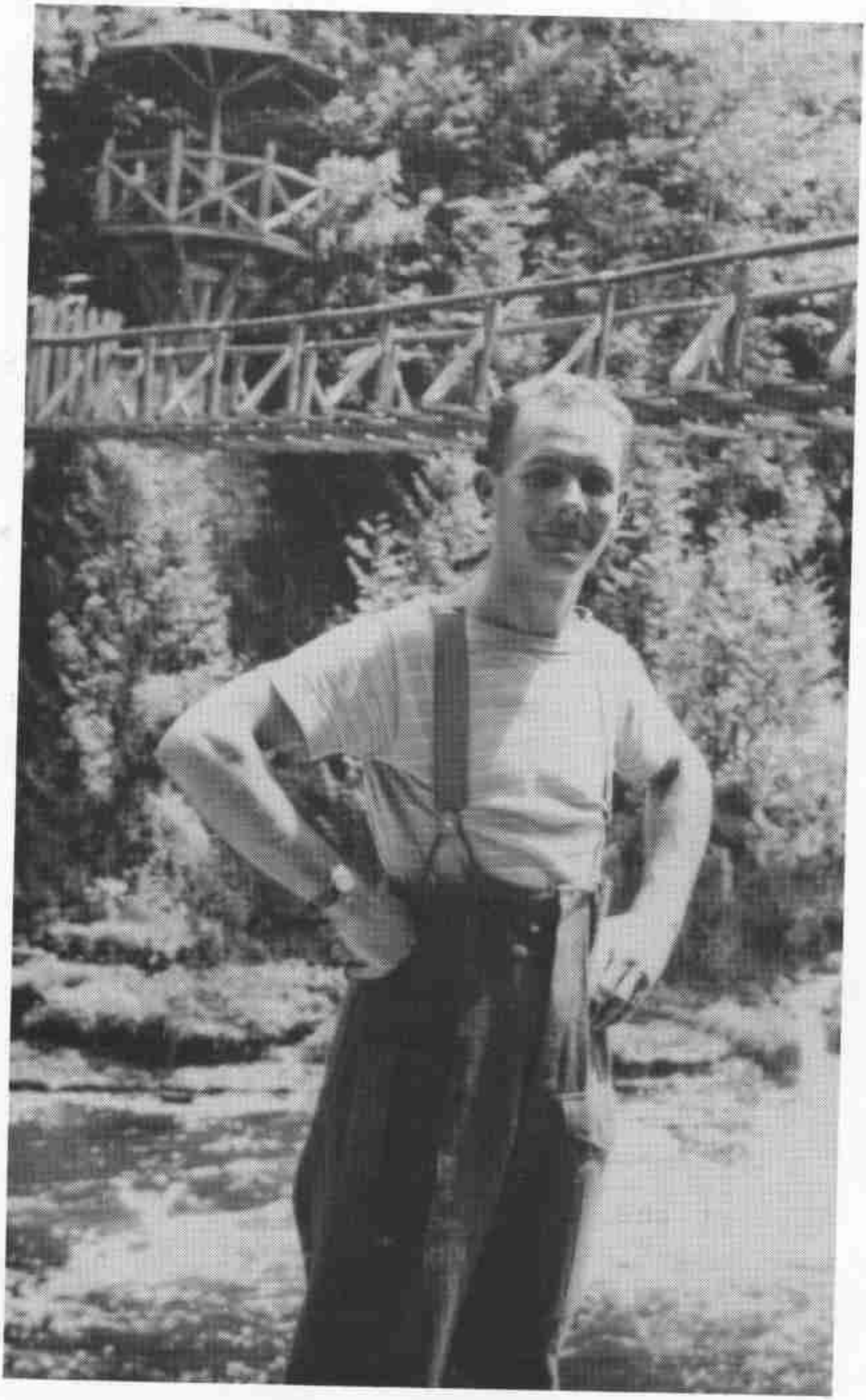
Troops assigned to the Alleutians (see map page 3) had been put on board at bayonet point. Troops stationed at Vernon B.C. seized control of the camp and mounted a machine gun on the parade ground against the officers. As trainloads of troops made stops at major centers on the way to Halifax, there were massive desertions, particulary in Quebec.

At the Exhibition Ross exchanged experiences with many who he had been trained with or who he had trained. At the Horse Palace some graffiti on the toilet walls read "One place where the British hold their own."

From there he was reassigned to do the basic training again and thus be eligible to be shipped overseas. He did his basic at Camp Ipperwash on Lake Huron. It was a scenic place. From there he was assigned as a private in the Kent Regiment at a camp on the edge of Niagara-on-the-lake.

Here he was able to circulate amongst select army comrades some Marxist books that he discovered at the local library. Also he went across the border to the Buffalo trotskyist branch some of whom he had met in Chicago in 1938. He brought back pamphlets. Sometimes a carload came over from Buffalo to meet up for mutually valuable discussions. Always a social was arranged. There were kids and a Sunday meal.

From Buffalo Ross took back a considerable amount of anti-war literature in his battle dress pants and blouse. He introduced some of his soldier friends to his meetings. He recruited two soldiers to the SWL; one from Windsor and one from Toronto. It was an intense period of agitation.



Ross was drinking with his peers, going into town even though he was not fond of beer. He was meeting the other agitators in the camp.

As the war drew to a close Ross learned that the army would be farming out troops at army rates of pay and under army discipline to corporations which were having difficulty maintaining a work force.

He tried to prepare the guys so they would not do it. It was scab labour. It so happened the Kent Regiment was to be among the first to do the work. He tried to convince the guys not even to get on to the train that was to take them to the army encampment at the Oakville job-site. He went thru several stages to moving up to action then retreat. It was an intense period of organizing, talking to people. He couldn't be open because he was organizing loyalty to the working class. At the same time the political situation was cracking wide open.

As the army detail continued to go for the job that they had been assigned (raising and tamping the track on the Toronto-Hamilton line) Dowson tried to increase resistance, which held, only to collapse at the next stage. Ross was in the first group of 200 that went to work on the railways. They were promised various perks such as being able to live at home on weekends since most came from the Toronto/Hamilton area. Ross went to railway stations where guys were moving about and told them to prepare for action and to support the men. He buttonholed people he knew as an ex-officer.

There were threats against him but Ross always talked them out of it. The brass created an atmosphere. On Monday August

20th 1945 the captain in charge of the troops formed them up ready to be marched down the tracks. The captain denounced "a disgruntled ex-officer in their ranks" who may face a charge of mutiny. Ross gave his powerful voice full vent. Reaching to his stomach to pull out a reply for all the assembly, Ross felt the support of the men in his guts, but the men went on the job.

On the job site Ross was ordered to go down the track two or three hundred yards from the rest of the detail. Ross refused. The officer said he would put Ross on charge. Ross replied "You do what you will." When given an official order he stated that he would not obey it. He was arrested and two soldiers were instructed to parade him back to camp.

As he passed by the rest of the detail he called out to them to come in behind him. Everyone fell in and when they arrived back at the encampment they were all confined to barracks.

The events were written up by Ross in the relaunched trotskyist press;

"Canadian troops in limited numbers, for some months past, have been forced to carry out the anti-labour policies of Mackenzie King. They had been ordered as slave-labor to work in brick yards, foundries, packing plants and on the docks and railways. Just like the youth of Hitler-Germany the soldiers worked under army discipline at army rates of pay, on army rations, in some cases for as long as 10 hours per day.

"Protest sit downs by a detachment of 140 men of the Kent Regiment at Oakville and 50 Military District troops at Glencoe who had been ordered to work as maintenance of way workers on the rail-

way brought the matter to public attention. ...

"On Tuesday, August 21st 140 men from M.D. 2 refused to work under these conditions at the notorious Canada Packers plant. Eight men and a corporal were remanded for District Court Martial for refusing to work at a St. Catherines, Ontario iron foundry at army pay. One man of the Kent Regiment was also remanded for a D.C.M. for refusing to work on the railway. The militant protest of the troops in the face of threats of dishonourable discharge and loss of gratuities and of being charged with mutiny forced a special Cabinet meeting on Wednesday night, August the 22nd. On the Thursday morning 45 men walked off the railway job in protest against conditions and the attempted isolation of some of their comrades by railway foremen. On Friday the army announced the discontinuance of forcing troops to work on civilian work at army pay and stated that henceforth this work would be on a voluntary basis and the soldiers would receive the rate for the job, but give up their army pay. At the same time the charges against the soldiers who refused to work were dropped."

In October Ross was discharged from the army.

"Notes for a sketch of Ross Dowson" by Arnie Mintz
(booklet published in Toronto October 12, 1988)

This is the original MS re-keyed (see picture JPG files of the actual pamphlet), but also including additional notes by R.D. and A.M., as well as corrections and notes by the Editor. The MS is in the Dowson archives at National Archives, Ottawa.

Key to the editing:
<<.....>> passages in R.D.'s handwriting, not published
((.....)) passages added by A.M. in the published version (after these notes)
(.....) text and grammatical changes by the Editor

Foreword by the Editor: this is a biographical sketch or Ross Dowson by an ex-member of the LSA, centering on Ross's early life and career as a revolutionist. Arnie had recently returned to Canada bearing the scars of a picket-line militant in Britain. By then he had evolved to the extreme left of the Trotskyist movement. Isolated and ill, he died in Toronto in the early 1990s with only a few of his ex-comrades attempting to support him.

"Notes for a sketch of Ross Dowson" by Arnie Mintz

Introduction

Many have met Ross. This is because he is always available. This book is about his youth. As best as possible this book tries to capture Ross's thinking at the time before and during WWII.

Ross was consulted in producing this small book. It can be appreciated that memory of events fifty years ago is often only general or changed by time. Events that seem important at the time diminish later. Events not prominent at the time become significant. So chance is involved. Sometimes recollections may be mixed with similar incidents years later. Available archive material has also been used.

This book will shed light on the dictatorship of the proletariat -- the workers tell the truth, the bosses lie -- always. To exploit human beings for capitalist profit, that is the definition of dishonesty.

Ross became a communist at an early age. All too often the revolutionary content of events is buried under a mountain of bourgeois filth. Here is an attempt to unearth it. Too much has remained buried. Still the reader will agree that Ross's memories are rich and vivid.
<<Arnie Mintz Toronto Oct. 27/88>>

CHAPTER ONE HIGH SCHOOL (1934-1938)

Ross was born in 1917. His father was a unionized printer, who as a craftsman became a foreman at Hunter Rose Eaton's Catalogue, and for a period during the Toronto printers' strike went to work on the US - Chicago Sears Roebuck (catalogue). (From this elite) element of the working class, his father was self-educated, a militant atheist and a collector of books on printing layout and color work. His collection included books on craft printing and also some first editions of such authors as Oscar Wilde. Some of these books (were the first) to stir Ross's idealism. Early on Ross acquired the smell of (printers') ink, because his father had printing presses and type font racks stored in the basement in his house on Grenadier Road, and did the odd (printing) job as a favor for friends.

His mother came from a moderately well off family of a school principal. When her father died she used part of her inheritance to put herself and her younger sister through an early course so they could sustain themselves as stenographers.

Ross's father (fostered) idealism in Ross's upbringing. His mother, (...) not an atheist as was his father, pushed him into attending the Sunday school at both High Park and at the United Church located at Eglinton and Guestville, into which he carried his atheism. He disturbed the teachers because he would speak up against what they said and get into arguments with them. This was embarrassing to have a young kid saying "no." They were pleased when he didn't come. They were on his side because they didn't want him there and he didn't want to be there. Eventually they gave up on him at 10 or 11 and his mother gave up on his religious training.

Ross had three brothers and three sisters. By 1934 one brother, Murray, older by two years, had already joined the Trotskyist "Workers Party" while a student at York Memorial Collegiate. Murray and Ross had been fighting for years. After all what could Murray know? Ross wanted to go around where Murray was, but Murray didn't want him.

So in early 1934 ((late 1934 or early 1935)) Ross joined (or) Murray recruited him anyway. At 17 years of age and (while) a student at York Memorial, Ross joined the Workers Party. Ross was inspired by the study classes on scientific socialism held by the Mount Dennis Spartacus Club in the first months of 1934 (1935?) The classes explained how the workers could get rid of

capitalism and how the young Ross could help. (He) was ready willing and able to work for communism. And work he did.

Ross, the youngest member of the York Township Workers Party Branch, listened, observed and helped in elections. He collected money for the Spanish revolutionists who were being murdered by the Stalinists, stood on picket lines such as Eaton's garment factory strikers and (the) Oshawa autoworker strikers, sold <<the Vanguard>> and assisted at open-air meetings at Earlscourt Park and at the corner of Weston Road and Eglinton. ((At one corner meeting he was forced to do the speaking. "Go on Ross, you can do it," said Sylvia.)) He learned to run the duplicator, (joined) in May Day marches and unemployed demonstrations, and attended Workers Party functions.

In January 1935 the Workers Party held an important public meeting of 700 at the Labor Temple on Church Street. Ross distributed leaflets for the meeting and <<took advantage of the rally to meet Spector>> who was explaining the Kirov assassinations in the Soviet Union. The assassination opened up trials which the next year led <<to Stalin's Frame-up trials of Lenin's entire General Staff as agents of imperialism.>>

Spector, the expelled editor of the Communist Party newspaper, had come up from New York where he was editor of the New International magazine. Spector's contribution to the WP was missed ((by the organization)) in Toronto. He made connections, was a brilliant orator: colorful, sophisticated. He was an able person who functioned in a limited movement although it was sometimes difficult with some of the youth who did not respect him. Spector was one of those responsible for launching the York Township Branch and it's unemployed work. Spector had continuing relations with individual branch members.

((The Workers Party had a wide range of activities, including (selling) the Vanguard and a Ukrainian paper. Noteworthy of its seriousness was its sport, including participating in a baseball league.))

But the WP was very isolated. It had practically no strength in the trade unions. <<It's connection with the Trade Unions was largely limited to the Jewish needle trade workers.>> The WP did what it could. It was able to sell the Vanguard at factories through personal contact. At Canada Packers where Ross worked during the summer, along with another WP member, he tried to organize a union but was unsuccessful. The shifts were very

tough, 7-7 on nights, but the money was good for a young kid making a full wage.

Returning to school, a Trotskyist group was organized at York Memorial. At this high school the teachers sympathized with the working class and a couple of teachers were good enough to hold classes after school which encouraged an interest in international affairs. One series <<held by the Spartacist (group) in private homes>> in November 1935, given by a postal worker <<leader>> explain(ed) the history of Canadian wealth. Other students were invited to join in the discussion circle which sometimes had up to 15 in attendance at person's homes.

The centre of the activities of the York Township Branch was the unemployed movement. Even as a student Ross was detailed to work with unemployed youth. Most of the branch was unemployed, plus some skilled workers and some students. With about 15 members the branch vied with the larger Communist Party for leadership of the unemployed movement.

There was a vibrant unemployed movement and York Township was its strong centre. The WP played a full part in it. One effective action was to take homelessness directly into their own hands and take over Coronation Park at Keele and Eglinton. They built burrows in the ground to live (in) with a shack overhead for a roof. The action was spearheaded by single unemployed who received no welfare. <<Single unemployed got no relief or welfare but were expected to share the family's relief cheque>>. (This) action included members of both the WP and the CP. Ross went over regularly to give support. The burrows were able to stay in use for two months before the police moved in to break it up. ((On one occasion in November 1935, the unemployed successfully seized <<demonstrated at the>> the York Township offices and held the Reeve in his office prisoner for a period. Confrontation works. Also there was a strike of unemployed relief workers. The council withdrew its cuts, trying to buy time.))

Unemployed workers were humiliated with vouchers so they could only get clothes at certain stores, hence a uniform for outcasts. But at one clothes giveaway, one of the unemployed guys grabbed a tuxedo and then wore it on garbage detail. The big issue was **cash relief**, not vouchers.

There were endless confrontations with the police who sought to wear down the activists. The unemployed were evicted from their homes. Sometimes there were mass anti-eviction actions of up to

450 persons. Ross would be amongst the group who would then take the furniture back in. The Bailiffs would take the furniture out, then the activists would take it back in.

Inspired by the B.C. Relief Camp strikes in 1935 and 1936, there were (further) strikes in Toronto of 2,000 relief workers centered in York Township, and the Workers Party supported the picketing. In June 1936 two CP unemployed leaders were amongst those arrested in midnight raids to try to break the strikes. Ross participated in the July 1935 march from York Township to Queen's Park. The unemployed wanted regular jobs and not to have to work for relief and especially not ((have to work for relief and specially not garbage work.))

Ross actively participated in the unemployed youth meetings at Silverthorne Hall. As one of seven children, Ross had a stripped down diet of barley soup, beans, bread and jam. After the unemployed youth meetings Ross and sometimes a few contacts would adjourn to the home of an unemployed friend who lived across the road for discussions and feast on baked goods which were lacking on his own family's table. The unemployed WP member who Ross went to the meetings with, lived across the road from the hall and they would go back afterwards for some sweets which were always on hand.

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In the spring of 1936, mass expulsions took place from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Moscow Trials were on. They marked a war against Trotskyism everywhere. A whole new era of thuggery and assault was opening up. In Canada, Trotskyist paper salesmen were chased away by goon squads and sometimes beaten up. It was a new atmosphere of viciousness which had legitimatized the killing of Trotskyists. Trotskyists were labeled by the CPers as agents of Hitler and the Mikado. There was a campaign against the Workers Party to isolate it. The WP was able to function only with increased difficulty.

At the same time, Jack Macdonald, the expelled General Secretary of the CP, and leading figure of the WP, was ill and tired. You could see it in his face. He would die in 1941 at 53 years of age. Macdonald, who spoke with a noticeable Scottish accent, was highly respected in workers' circles. He exuded confidence to workers. He was a proletarian spokesman with a long tradition in the working class. The young Ross would never really get to know him.

((In June 1936 Ross completed senior matriculation. He passed a full program of Upper School Exams, finished high school and went to work.))

After finishing school, Ross worked at various jobs. For a while for instance he was a shipper. Also he kept busy collecting money for revolutionists in Spain. He discussed political differences with a small anarchist group when it attended WP meetings. Aid to Spain was a big issue. The Stalinists wanted to send beans. Ross wanted to send guns.

((Around this time he attended a meeting of Bukharin's supporters held at Cumberland Hall near Bloor and Yonge. Lovestone, who became a fink in the American Federation of Labor, was the speaker. One time a top leader of the American CP he was speaking on the Moscow Trials. Ross was extremely nervous. This was an internationally known speaker and he had never done this kind of thing before. Nobody else exposed Lovestone so Ross got up to defend Trotsky.))

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Around this time some Canadian fascists attempted to hold a meeting at Weston Road and Eglinton. Ross went with about ten WP comrades to break up the meeting. They got up in the meeting to disrupt it and were thrown out.

In 1935 and 1936 the WP began to discuss entry into the CCF. ((The French Trotskyists had previously undertaken the highly controversial tactic of entry into the Socialist Party of France.)) The American Trotskyists had entered the SP in June 1936 and this affected the Canadian WP which hitherto had been established as branches of the Communist League of America.

((Ross attended downtown branch meetings on Sundays. He met a few of the younger members. It was at these meetings that the arguments were held over entry. In order for the York Township members to get home they would have to break up the meetings. Ross took the Weston Road streetcar to the Northlands loop. After 12:30 there was no streetcar transfer at the loop which marked the city limits, so he used to walk home from the loop.))

Forays were made to scout and make connections in the CCF and CCF Youth. Ross was asked to record some of his experiences so he went in 1936 to build from scratch a CCYM group in York Township.

He made progress and recruited some people. It was hard unpleasant work for a revolutionist. ((The whole atmosphere was stifling. It was full of bureaucratic maneuvering and blatant careerism. It was unlike the WP which was alive with dynamic self-sacrifice and stimulating persons.)) Some members of the WP were scandalized by what he was trying to do. Ross wanted to see how the clock ticked; what the possibilities were. He found it rather difficult, where people treated him as a spy.

The CCYM youth leadership killed the club. Better to have no club than have Ross. The executive withheld a club charter unless Ross was expelled. He was. After Ross appeared at the Provincial Executive, one of the executive, Fred Dowling <<subsequently the leader of the Canadian Packinghouse Workers' Union>>, commented bizarrely, “I hope you won't be discouraged <<and will continue to be active for socialism”>>. Like Dowling, other CCYM leaders became part of the trade union officialdom <<with the rise of the CIO-CLC.>>

Ross <<concluded that the CCF-CCYM provided no opening for revolutionists,>> and was repulsed by the experience. *(Note by A.M. written in margin: "I wasn't repulsed by my experience in our class.")* ((It was rife with manipulation; a swamp. He concluded that the CCYM provided no openings for revolutionists. Like any other experience Ross knew that as a Bolshevik he had to make the most of whatever experience he was fortunate enough to go through.))

He wrote a document for the WP discussion "Why I oppose entry." ((He wrote a document/report of experiences in the CCYM for the WP discussions. Spartacus Youth decided to enter the CCYM in June on a vote of 17 for, 15 against. Work was not really begun until September. The morale of the organization on the whole was very poor. When the question of working towards a split from the CCYM was brought up and voted upon, the vote was 10 for, 8 against. Many of those who are in the CCYM had been attending CCYM meetings very irregularly.))

The Workers Party had several months of bitter internal friction over the entry. This led to a convention. Ross was one of the delegates. The entry was supported by Macdonald. The convention voted by 35 to 20 to enter the CCF. In January 1937 the Vanguard ceased to appear. In May 1937 entry as individuals was agreed <<to by the CCF brass> and the WP was dissolved. The bitterness of the dispute carried on after the entry. The minority did not take part in the new executive. The minority

distributed international literature. There were really two groups now. Macdonald <<became completely inactive.>> The entry had a large component of defeatism. The entry was premised on crystallizing a left wing (within the CCF) but none such existed. It was false premises. The WP was having a hard time. The entry ran concurrent with the disintegration of the Workers Party. It was a false orientation.

***

In 1937 Ross continued to go to WP educational meetings when they occurred. Ross got some welcome sleep. He played tennis. He had enough gall to challenge for the Ontario championships and lasted three rounds. In the Spring of 1937 Ross and some comrades jumped into a car to go to the Oshawa autoworkers picket line. ((The strike established industrial unionism, the CIO in factories in Canada. The government sent in mounted police, "Hepburn's Hussars", to try to break the strike and vowed it would stop the CIO at the border, but the strike was solid.))

((In 1937, Ross kept in contact. He went to educational meetings when they would occur. Around this time he helped to organize the John Reed Club at the Workmen's Circle. He was the only "goy" in the circle.))

But the collapse of the downtown WP was disastrous. The HQ had been at 320 Spadina. In order to get into the HQ you had to go through a part of the Ukrainian Trotskyist's print shop where the comps *(compositors –ed.)* handset the type. There were shelves of type fonts. The "Vanguard" and the Ukrainian paper were <<put out together there --composed but not printed.) When a comrade went down in 1937 he found everything was going into the furnace. Ross, already expelled from the CCF, was in limbo. So were a number of (other members of) the WP, particularly Spartacus Youth leaders, excluded from the CCF.>>

At Christmas 1937-38, Ross went to Chicago to attend the American Trotskyist's convention on the occasion of their split from the SP <<and the founding of the SWP.>> A Canadian Commission was held designed to bring about the unification and reconstitution of the movement in Canada. The Commission, at which Ross, (as) one of the representatives of the minority, called for "the fusion of the majority comrades with the active nucleus of the minority." Canadian comrades should concentrate their main efforts on work within the CCF with a view to

climaxing entry by a complete programmatic and political fight at or around the fall national convention of the CCF."

There was a continuing dispute throughout 1938. More meetings, more submissions. The majority showed resistance to leaving the CCF and (to) a fusion with the minority, the two issues being closely connected. The Chicago decisions were still (only) on paper.

Ross was still a kid. He didn't know what was going on, was inexperienced, and wanted to see unity. The Commission <<was composed of competent comrades>>, more competent than he. Ross signed the document to resolve to attempt to work together. As loyal members, the anti-entry group committed itself to regroup. The minority was in limbo, though it got together informally sometimes.

In April 1938, the ex-WP began to publish a left-wing CCF bulletin. During the summer Ross was at an anti-fascist demo at Massey Hall. There were arrests and a street fight. Police broke up the counter-demonstration. Ross had just completed high school, and was bound for work.

CHAPTER TWO -- WORK (1938-)

After finishing school <<and after working part-time as a shipper at Firstbrooke Boxes,>> Ross landed a job as an office worker at Kodak.

In September, the Fourth International founding conference held a Canadian Commission urging "any delay in break(ing) with the bureaucracy of the CCF is exceedingly harmful. (An) end to (the) unprofitable existence in (the) CCF." <<?>>

Meanwhile, Ross's father had retired. He decided he wasn't going to work any more. He said if he had $50 or whatever <<(deleted by RD) he could get a place downtown. So Ross gave him the money. His father was causing a crisis in the family by not working. Ross continued to see his father (in order to) see he ate regularly.>>

So Ross is working at Kodak. He is in the active nucleus of the minority and helping to support the family of eight. Only two were working: he and a sister. He knew, everybody knew, the war is coming. So when the war is coming, you know there is going to

be an expansion of industry ((a massive explosion of industrial production of war materiel.))

After the entry the movement dissolved. It revived under a scholar ((some intellectuals)) from University (Earl Birney?) These types tried to give leadership to the CCF entry. The Trotskyist movement is in decay and going down. The leadership is well-meaning petty-bourgeois, (and) incompetent, but they are the leadership. The anti-entry forces like Ross tended to (stay) away for a while, though Ross participated in a mass anti-fascist demo on Bloor Street at Bathurst. A lot of different groups were involved. The street was jammed and the meeting blocked.

Finally in December 1938 the Trotskyists were expelled from the CCF and it was decided to launch the Socialist Workers League. A printed paper was put out. It was difficult to sell subscriptions. The paper attacked the war, opposing the Stalinists and largely oriented to recruiting from the crisis-ridden CP as war loomed, though Ross was skeptical about this orientation. Ross had just come through a fight over their CCF orientation. He was only beginning to mature, at 21 years of age. <<? a bad case of delayed development, eh!>> ((He was maturing, at 21 years of age.))

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1939 the SWL was a central part of the (leadership) of another strike of 2,000 unemployed relief workers centering in York Township. They demanded restoration of relief cuts, retention of single unemployed relief and work at trade union wages.

In the summer of 1939 the SWL attempted to work with the League for a Revolutionary Workers Party, <<the Canadian associates of B.J. Field, much stronger in Canada than in the US>>, (with) a common May Day meeting and an anti-fascist demo. The LRWP was started in 1934 on the basis of personal gripes in the WP. It collapsed ((disappeared)) at the onset of WW II. But for a while it was more active and more dynamic. Unlike the WP the LRWP had some able women members. The LRWP in Toronto held street corner meetings and had a HQ in downtown Toronto. They were very active. They had young people.

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The Stalin/Hitler Pact in August 1939 opened the war. It had a staggering impact amongst Jewish workers in the needle trades.

With the beginning of WW II printers wouldn't handle the paper so it came out clandestinely.

The police were promoting persons to phone in reporting anybody who said anything of a disloyal nature. The press reported <<that the police picked up>> (anyone) for saying 'to hell with the Queen,' or King. <<With the outbreak of the>> war in September 1939 <<the leadership of>> the SWL decided <<to organize a public meeting with the main speaker an English socialist -- Frank Watson>> on the street corner of Brunswick and College <<on opposition to the war.>>

Watson was arrested at the meeting with <<about 60 passersby who had gathered>> in attendance. Watson was jailed for speaking out against the war. He was the first person to be prosecuted under <<the defense of Canada regulations, which when he came before the court, he learned were not yet even published>>. Ross wasn't at the meeting <<he didn't know about it until reading the daily press.>> Watson had just come to Toronto <<from England -- a vigorous anti-fascist who had been helping bring radicals out of Germany to England, and was a militant opponent of WW II.>>

<<It would appear that the SWL leadership thought that this protest would spark broader protests against the war, but it was not to be. Ross himself was asked to contact the anarchist Emma Goldman but she was ill. She demurred -- and died in Toronto shortly after. Ross thought that the whole project was ill-advised and would not, could not go anywhere, let alone spark a real movement.>> <<RD deleted: Pacifist CCF leader Woodsworth made known his personal opposition to the war, turned over the leadership to M.J. Coldwell who in the name of the CCF parliamentary caucus, endorsed the war, and the gravely ill Woodsworth was pushed aside.>>

<<*RD deleted:* Ross objected to the martyr set-up.>> Watson was sentenced to three months in jail and another 3 months or a $300 fine.>> Ross visited Watson in the Don Jail on Gerrard St. He took him some books <<and (organized) a modest campaign to pay off the fine>> and get Watson out until the trial. The SWL was banned <<RD deleted: declared illegal by the Lieutenant-Governor>> <<and was forced>> underground but a defence committee was launched, gained some support <<in some union locals and gave publicity to the Watson case>> amid intensified censorship.

Clandestine SWL activity continued. The intellectuals deserted the organization leaving a handful of ranks, including

Ross, to fend for themselves. Ross took his direction from Trotsky, <<?>>) whose murder in Mexico by Stalin in (1940), staggered Ross. The group tried to circulate its newspaper by <<circulating it amongst acquaintances and such means as>> inserting into library books, and they went up tall buildings like the ones between stores at Queen and Yonge, dropping papers on the crowd in the streets below. Ross became fully involved in the publication of <<this very modest>> paper. Writing for the paper he began to really understand the Trotskyist program for the first time. The paper was largely published to hold the group together. Ross <<assumed the responsibility of editing it shortly before it folded up>> ((after a couple of issues in June 1942). <<There were problems obtaining paper.>> Progressively it became very vague. They (had to decide) what to do.

In the summer of 1941 the SWL decided to <<encourage its handful of members and sympathizers to get jobs in basic>> industry. Ross finished up at Kodak, took a course on <<machine shop work sponsored by the government in order to become an effective trade union member.>> But found that he couldn't get a job <<in any in any of the big unionized shops without presenting army rejection or discharge papers.>> Ross got a job at <<one of the many small shops that sprang up to take army contracts as>> a supposed tool and die maker. In November 1941 Ross attended the funeral of Macdonald. There was a large crowd present.

In 1941 it was decided that he should make a trip across Canada to pull the connections together, to renew the broken connections. So Ross went West, hitch-hiking. As there was no Trans-Canada highway then across Northern Ontario, he hitch-hiked to Sault-Ste Marie <<and from there took a boat across Lake Superior to Port Arthur/Fort William>> (Thunder Bay).

His first destination was Saskatchewan where there had been connections. There's no traffic on the Prairie roads. If you don't take the first thing to come along, you don't get there. He would not see anybody for hours. His first stop was Wiseton, Saskatchewan where he met a comrade <<who had homesteaded there.>> It is in the middle of the Prairies. Then he went on to Saskatoon (where he met) remarkable people but largely isolated <<and older veterans of previous class battles.>> <<RD omit: One guy was waiting for word from Toronto for the insurrection. He had guns in the barn.>>

Then on to Lloydminster <<on the Saskatchewan-Alberta border, where he arrived at the height of a torrential rain storm that

blocked Ross from reaching his objective -- Steanstown -- the roads had been washed out, and would not be re-opened for several days, possibly for a week or more. He later learned that there were contacts in Lloydminster itself, but he was unable to locate them on that trip.>> (...) Ross had never been out West before. He had no idea of the vastness, its sparsely populated, undeveloped character. There were whole gaps where <<he had no leads.>> <<RD omit: He was lonely, in the middle of WW II's tumultuous events.>>

But then he would get to a place where he had an address and the doors would open to him. <<At Moon Lake, not far from Edmonton in Alberta he contacted a sophisticated worker militant, a miner who had been active in the organizing of the Alberta coal miners' struggles and in the Communist Party from which he had broken to support Trotsky and the Left Opposition. At that time he was farming-homesteading at Christina Lake in B.C. (where) he contacted a woman and her husband who had been a leading activist in the CP. She had been a nurse and was inspired to hear of the efforts to build a new Trotskyist movement."

Ross made it to a couple of other places on the Prairies. ((Ross went to Medicine Hat to see an uncle who gave him a meal and a few dollars. He went through the Rocky Mountains at Fernie. He went on to Notch Hill, on Lake Shuswap. This comrade, a Swede, had built his own wooden house on the lakeshore. <<He and his wife who taught in the local one-room school house>> had a large family <<and were highly respected and widely known as socialists through the community.>> Everyone in the family played a musical instrument... They farmed a clearing up on the hills overlooking the lake. They had long been identified with the Socialist Party of Canada which had been a key component of the left in the B.C. CCF. They organized a meeting for Ross as they had often done for leading CCFers Woodsworth and Angus MacInnis. Some 20 to 25 persons jammed the benches in the school house to hear Dowson explain the SWL's opposition to the war and project the socialist revolution which would result from it.>>

There was a scattering of contacts. In one area he had to go over <<mountain ranges to get to the BC Coast.>> Up and down, then up and down again -- dangerous as hell. <<RD omit: In another (area) he got a ride from a guy stewed to the gills. There were bears and wildlife about. Ross never thought he'd make it.>>

Suddenly he came onto a main street of a community with false fronts like in a Western movie. It seemed the town was deserted -- <<the local mines worked out.>> But there were little kids running around. These were the Japanese who'd been ripped out of B.C. The women and children <<separated from their husbands>> were here in Greenwood, B.C. <<We went through this remarkable sight of government callousness in internment.>>

((At Christina Lake in B.C. he contacted a woman and her husband who had been a leading activist in the CP. She was a real house of fire, a plebian, a nurse. She was inspired by the efforts to rebuild the Trotskyist movement.))

So Ross made it to Vancouver. He headed straight to meet Paddy Stanton who ran a newsstand <<on a central street corner known to everyone as carrying the dailies, but for special customers, the American socialist periodicals "The Militant" and the "Fourth International" and assorted pamphlets by Leon Trotsky.>> ((Stanton was known to everybody. He went to the Stanley Park CCF club -- all the radicals went there. Ross spoke at a couple the Forums.)) <<*RD omit:* The Vancouver Trotskyists had never left the CCF. They had to be pulled out of the CCF. They had become left-wing CCFers.>> ((It was operating as a Marxist group in the CCF. The CCF discussions were unsatisfactory -- ??>> ((The CCF was affecting the SWL.))

The working class <<of Canada and in fact the leadership of the Canadian Congress of Labour rejected the Communist Party's efforts to commit them to a no-strike pledge for the duration of the war.>> Paddy Stanton played a key role in opposing any no-strike pledge. <<Delegate Stanton was given the go-ahead by the chair of the Quebec City convention to make a key speech in opposition to the (no-)strike pledge during which he heaped scorn (on) the CP for betraying Lenin. Stanton praised Lenin who the CP claims to emulate, for advocating and carrying out the greatest general strike in history, in the midst of a war -- the Russian Revolution.>>

The CCF left <<was also known by insiders as>> the White Lunch gang. These were working-class cafeterias where radicals <<often congregated to meet one another and have a coffee.>> Paddy had been a Wobbly ((always a mark of real distinction)). Ross spent a month in Vancouver working and talking to the group. A branch meeting was held and correspondence was set up and relations reestablished.

Ross hitch-hiked back to Toronto. He attended the funeral of Jack Macdonald. There was a large crowd present. In the summer of 1942 Ross enlisted in the army.

CHAPTER 3 ((Chapter Four)) -- ARMY

OMISSIONS FROM THE MINTZ PUBLISHED TEXT:

(A) Page 33, 2nd para: "While on leaves he participated in Toronto SWL meetings, although the paper had ceased to appear in June 1942."

(B) Page 38, 4th para: "In the meantime the SWL was pulling its modest forces together. They issued and distributed an effective leaflet hailing May Day 1944."

(C) Page 39, 5th para: "Unlike the Canadian Trotskyists who were driven underground, the SWP was not only functioning, like its British co-thinkers, quite openly, but following the celebrated trial of its leadership in Minneapolis for their opposition to the war, winning widening support."

(D) Page 41, 2nd para: *(a different version, including a canary sheet handwritten text, attached to Page 24)*

"As the war drew to a close Ross learned that Ottawa rather than release Canadian forces who were on-stream in Canada, back to civilian life, had decided to farm them out at army rates of pay and under army discipline to corporations which were having difficulty maintaining a work force. It so happened that the Kent Regiment was the first to be put to the test, and Dowson set about to prepare them to resist this ominous anti-labor action of the King government.

"As the army detail continued to approach the job that they had been assigned to --raising and tarping the track on the Toronto Hamilton line-- Dowson tried to increase resistance -- which held -- only to collapse at the next stage. He approached the Toronto press in an attempt to get publicity, but the reporters, some of whom expressed sympathy, were concerned their editors would not publish such a story in the midst of a war.

"Dowson, who held a membership in the High Park CCF, learned that CCF leader M.J. Coldwell would be addressing the annual party picnic (and) went to meet Coldwell to see what could

be done. He expressed indignation that railway workers, the first union supporters of the CCF, would be challenged by the use of union-busting forced labor, and assured Ross that at the coming session of the House of Commons he would protest. He affirmed his intention in a letter a day or so later.

"When Dowson presented Coldwell's letter, articles appeared in the press. The next morning the captain in charge of the troops formed them up before marching down the tracks to denounce 'a disgruntled ex-officer in their ranks,' who may face the charge of mutiny. Dowson protested, and when on the job (site) was ordered to move 200 or 300 yards down the track from the rest of the detail. When given the official order he stated that he would not obey it, he was arrested, and two soldiers were instructed to parade him back to camp. As he passed by the rest of the regiment, everyone fell in behind him and when they arrived at the encampment they were all confined to barracks. This got considerable publicity and resulted in strikes by army and air-force men in similar circumstances throughout Ontario.

"The next day the King government met in cabinet to cancel the whole project, making them henceforth voluntary and at prevailing rates of pay.

"Upon returning to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Dowson applied for an educational discharge to go to university. But he never really did go -- he got involved in writing and the promotion (of) the paper Labor Challenge."

"--30—"

Further omissions from the Mintz published text:

(E) Page 42, 4th para: "The officer had hinted at a charge of mutiny but Ross knew he had broad support. The soldiers were being used as cheap labor under army discipline. The officer ordered guys to seize Ross under arrest. Ross called them to 'Come in behind me.' They marched in a body back to camp, triumphant.

"This is how Ross wrote up the situation in an early issue of Labor Challenge when the SWL was wondering if the RCMP would be ordered to crack down on them.

(F) Page 43, 3rd para: "In October Ross was released from the army on an educational discharge to go to the University of Toronto. He used up his credits but he never made it. He commenced to help write and circulate the new Trotskyist paper Labor Challenge."

(R.D.'s notes re NDP federal council, 1988 – found in October)

The NDP federal council's adoption of the report "Canada's stake in Common Security" on the very eve of the 1983 federal election marks a significant reversal in NDP party policy, and renders it increasingly similar to the parties of Big Business, and by a process that is in violation of the much vaunted democratic procedure… (different not in any fundamental programmatic way…largely a matter of style, hence the concentration of this campaign on the image of its national leader Ed Broadbent)…

It took some decades of persistent deception and browbeating by the Coldwell-Lewis leadership to succeed in its efforts to clear the party of its founding declaration adopted by the 1933 Regina Convention, committing the movement to a policy of public ownership, to a planned economy, and irreconcilable opposition to capitalism; (to a policy) designed to make the world safe for capitalism and to make capitalism work (through adoption of the) Winnipeg Manifesto of 1969. When the delegates at that year's convention committed the party to withdrawal of Canada from membership in the cold war NATO and NORAD military alliances, they have been tireless in their efforts to wipe this policy off the books, as the 1988 election loomed on the horizon. In 1983 and again in 1985 the delegates rebuffed their efforts. But this April, foiled in its efforts to obtain membership authority through convention, it has achieved its purpose, (passing) through committee and the federal council so outlandish (a policy) that it legitimizes the most bellicose a cover…

It is indeed ironical that this action culminates, comes to pass, as the countries aligned with the Warsaw Pact are in an unending political crisis which appears to be without end with the USSR pulling back from its adventure in Afghanistan – and cutting back its nuclear arsenal along with so-called conventional arsenals, and is opening up Soviet society through the policies of perestroika (and) glasnost.

While admitting that Canada is not threatened and the only war it is likely to be involved in would be the final war – a nuclear war – the report adopted by the party's leadership commits the MPs to support an extensive expansion of not only its permanent forces but also vastly wider a network of militia forces – with the corollary that with this modernized defence program it will allow it to enter into the highly competitive but highly profitably arms trade – become in effect a member of that cynical cabal of merchants of death that fattens itself on the shrunken wasted body of the oppressed of the Third World, those living under the dictators who play off one military ruler against the other. (This is an) absurd defence of Canada through the useless luxury of under-ice nuclear-powered submarine fleets under the ice hummocks of the Artic seas. The New Common Security federal council policy cries out for opposition from the party's ranks. The ONDP Left Caucus played a key role in the previous struggles against the leadership's efforts to reverse the party's anti-NATO, anti-NORAD policies. With the federal council's adoption of Canada's Stake in Common Security, finding all party channels blocked, (it) had to make a difficult decision. It decided that it had no alternative to voice public opposition.

(As for) our commitment to the NDP as a labor party, silence can only be at the expense of the future development of the NDP…

(Notes entitled:) "NDP-1"

Will the men and women running under the banner of the New Democratic Party and the thousands of campaign activists succeed in winning sufficient new support to establish a governing majority in Ottawa? We will have candidates in every riding with more resources than ever before(?) There will be women candidates, probably more unionists with a base in their shops, as candidates. While there are lots of problems there is an air of confidence that together we can solve them.

The credibility of the party's leading spokesperson is at the highest (point). The war danger is still ebbing. Then how come I feel so low?

It must be the adoption by the party's federal council of the report "Canada's Stake in Common Security"! While the edge has been taken off it due in large part to important gestures by the designated enemy threat of war, nuclear war confronts humankind particularly with the continued buildup of arms…

In 1969 delegates at the NDP federal convention adopted a position favoring Canada's withdrawal from membership in the "U.S. State Department-dominated 'cold war' NATO-NORAD military alliances. Ever since then the party leadership has publicly disassociated itself from that position – particularly Ed Broadbent, who on every possible occasion publicly disassociates himself from it, and at the 1983 and again at the 1985 federal conventions they (the NDP leadership) mobilized forces to change the party policy. The delegates defeated these attempts.

It is this position that has become the main target of attacks against the party by such avowed enemies such as the National Coalition as well as from "friends" on the editorial boards of such papers as the Globe & Mail.This spring, having failed to rescind the party's official position, and heading into the election where it would be under attack, the federal leadership in apparent desperation resorted to a process in crudest violation of its much vaunted democracy. Its International Affairs Cttee. was assigned the job of preparing a report to go before the federal council (en)titled "Canada's Stake in Common Security." While it is a double-talking, hedging document, its function is crystal clear – to rid the party leadership of embarrassing positions defended by the party membership.

With this document the federal council decrees what it could not convince convention delegates to accept. Whereas NDP policy conventions have been unequivocal in their rejection of NORAD, the new report states that "we will negotiate a new air defence alliance with the US to replace NORAD…" With regards to NATO it relegates the decision to withdraw (to) an indefinite future and only with agreement of its NATO partners with whom it will continue to participate in its councils.

Though blocked from working through the normal channels that are being geared up for the election, the Left Caucus decided that it could not remain silent. It's Steering Committee met in June to endorse a statement reaffirming the convention decisions and in particular condemning the Council's report supporting the Tory government's commitments to Canada's joining in the global arms race at the time that the Soviet areas are embarked on a program of disarmament.

While the election machine has supplanted all avenues of the party the Left Caucus decided to make every effort to appeal to the party ranks. It circulated its open letter, along with a petition seeking signatures, to the federal council as widely as possible – to its bulletin list, to the NDP and other left press, to the political contingent at the Toronto Labor Day parades, key NDP nomination meetings in the Toronto area, (and) to key mailing lists available to it. The election has constrained this – but the issue is too critical to be silenced. With this success in silencing the NDP's leadership the New Right's appetite will become more avaricious.

The response which has been tapering up as the election campaign begins to peak, (is) over a dozen petitions with additional names (which) have been returned to us; others have been forwarded (to) us…

(Notes accompanied by three pages of dense penned notes, of interest for further detailed research).

this is the surname for Cave

Doctorow Tator
Toronto Western

November 18, 1988
#1809 - 40 Homewood Ave.,
Toronto, M4Y2K2

An evening or so prior to my November 14 appointment for the Catscan I took in a movie, a recent Prize winner made in China-Red Sorghum. When I came to leave and commenced to walk down a long gradual ramp to the street I found I had little or conno control of b my right foot--I found myself heading down the rampable to only stand up by leaning hevily on the wall. When I got the the street to wlk home- I live only a few block from the theater-I found myself dragging my foot and leg. Since then I find that the cane which previously I had used as alargely psychological aid has become a necessxry ity to propeal me along and to give me balance. Before gxxx going in for the Castcan I attempted to contact you hovere your nurse tolde to ralke to the technician but of course I thought there was no apurpose particularly when I leade learned that they were only going to take shots of my heard(your nurse told me your where in an operating theater)

My impression is that I am undergoing a period of rapid change--detrioration. I find it increasingly difficualt to write and to use the typewriter. I talk without th facility I j have long had. I am easily thrown off balance--so much so that I now walk with the tnseness uncertainty that ias uauslly associated with really old peoplae and here I am onl 71 years of age. Yesyerday I want over to see Dr Balu Blau. This note is a product of that visit. So I would not forget anything I sketched out a few points. One was that for the pa several months my right foot has become swollen when I go ouy om my walks. She examined it any re expressed suprise. She said that she kk had thought that we had solved that prob but she is mistalken--we never ever did. We just gave up on the podiatrist and went in the direction of the neueo neurologist Dr. O'Connor. Earlier we have been to therapy where I was told that I was not relaxing my leg muscles--but I was and I think this is a condition of aging prtpersons. I seem to recall coiming across comments to effect is in some previous reading . I think that I am suffering a serious loss of energy. I think that I told you that as soonas a riste to my feet from a chair I feel tired

I am sending you these notes on the suggestion of Dr Blau. She has probably mentioned this in a letter that she has sent to you. When she noticed the notes that I hsd made for meeting with her she suggested that I send them to no you--but thery were written and worse than my typing

I am looking forward to meeting you agains shortly and hearing your diagnosis

sincerely

Ross Dowson

LC News Vol. 2 #4 Nov. 1988

Left Caucus challenge to NDP fed. council

By Ross Dowson
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Although the edge has been taken off the longstanding threat of humankind's nuclear destruction, the danger of war remains the major challenge before the world's peoples. Developments in the Soviet areas stand in startling contradiction to the arms build up elsewhere across the globe, including here in Canada.

In 1969 the delegates at the federal NDP convention adopted a position that Canada should withdraw from membership in the U.S. State Department-dominated "cold war" NATO/NORAD military alliances. Ever since then the party leadership, when not attempting to pass resolutions such as it did at the 1983 and again at the 1985 convention that would reverse the party's stand, have publicly declared their opposition to official party policy. This crude display of opportunism, instead of molifying has only served to embolden such avowed enemies of the party as the National Citizen's Coalition as well as many self-professed "friends" who urge the NDP to go all the way and in particular to line up into a coalition behind the Liberals on the free trade issue.

(Broadbent cartoon)

Nothing to do but cripple the Party to fit the shoe!

Having failed to rescind the party's official position, and heading into the federal election where this position would be under heavy fire, this past spring, in apparent desperation, the leadership resorted to a process in crude violation of its most vaunted democratic principles. It assigned the International Affairs Committee the task of preparing a new statement to go before the federal Council entitled Canada's Stake in Common Security. While it is a double-talking hedging document, its function is clear -- to rid the party leadership of the embarrassing positions persistently defended by the party membership.

Whereas NDP policy conventions have been unequivocal in their rejection of NORAD, the new report states that "we will negotiate a new air defence alliance with the U.S. to replace NORAD..." With regards to NATO it relegates the decision to withdraw to an indefinite future and then only with the agreement of its NATO partners with whom it will continue to collaborate.

This backsliding was embarrassingly obvious when (...missing)

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Letter defends anti-NATO policy

"Continued from page 3"

Broadbent retreated before Liberal leader John Turner's pro-NATO attack in one of the leaders' debates. Broadbent affirmed what the Left Caucus had suspected: that an NDP government led by Broadbent would not presume to withdraw from NATO "unilaterally", i.e. without the consent of NATO in order to maintain stability (read the status quo). Ironically the relegation of the NDP's position to withdraw Canada from NATO to "some time in the future" has gravely hurt the NDP's electoral prospects, leaving it vunerable to continus charges of the crassest electorial opportunism.

Since the Federal Council report all the normal channels of the party have been blocked by preparations to fight and win the election. But the Left Caucus decided in the interests of the party that it dare not remain silent. Its steering committee met in June to discuss and endorse a statement re-affirming previous NATO/NORAD opposition and in particular condemning the Federal Council's new statement committing the party to support of a major expansion of Canada's military budget. It decided to alert the party ranks by circulating its open letter to the Federal Council along with a petition form for getting additional signatures in support of this protest. Copies of the Left Caucus Open Letter can be obtained by sending in a request to the ONDP Left Caucus Bulletin. Whichever way the election goes this remains unfinished business before the party.

(Handwritten notes by R.D.)

Report – Discussion with Dr. TATOR – Toronto Western Hospital, Thurs. Dec. 15/88

I had met him in the hospital hallway a few hours before I told him the tests had been completed and he shortly after turned up in my room with the lab reports etc. – Mr. Orr a fellow patient from Orillia was there, herd our exchange and affirmed my impressions of it.

The report did not really affirm my fears or his speculations.
They do not show any blockage of fluid in the skull or at least not to any extent requiring correction thru an operation. I gather the problem(s) I had noted are not obviously due to any blockage. He said I have demonstrated three of the symptoms (1) memory loss (2) lessening of bladder control and (3) problems of walking. But there is no reason to believe that an operation would rectify. The operation that he had contemplated has small risk 2%, (is) not a major operation, had proven beneficial in many cases but (he) can't see it being useful in my case. He suggests that I take the memory tests that they had ventured into earlier – and that I meet and discuss with a neurologist – a Dr. Ashby ? He is releasing me from hospital tomorrow so that I can go home. He is discarding the idea of inserting a shunt which would have been the major purpose of my operation. He will be sending a report to Dr. Blau which I will go with Lois to hear.

…Iodine staining – thro my neck into my skull worked
…insertion of radioactive pellets thro my spine bases – unfortunately they just went into my main circulatory system – failure. Got the information they wanted from the iodine.

The doctor of the day I had a run in with Dr. Stetchison (The doctor made his rounds this morning – showed me a hive -- very bad incident).

(other notes)

Quality of life – I pressed them along the lines that it is hardly worth living; what you have to put up with – do something

Dr. O'Connor: the words Spinal taps he uttered in passing. I can live with my present ''disability'' and enjoy life for many years. I told the Chinese doctor that I was vigorously opposed to any action – even exploratory ones that in any way could be considered risky, entailing any danger. He said he would speak to Dr. Tator. (…)